

LECTURES

ON

ST. PAUL'S FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

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LECTURES

CHIEFLY EXPOSITORY

ON

ST. PAUL'S FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

With Notes and Illustrations.

BY

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JOHN HUTCHISON, D.D.,

BONNINGTON, EDINBURGH.

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1884.

“Ich bin überzeugt, dass die Bibel immer schöner wird, je mehr man sie versteht, d. h. je mehr man einsieht und anschaut, dass jedes Wort, das wir allgemein auffassen und im Besondern auf uns anwenden, nach gewissen Umständen, nach Zeit und Ortsverhältnissen einen eigenen, besondern unmittelbar individuellen Bezug gehabt hat.”—GOETHE, Ethisches.

PREFACE.



THIS volume, like that which I have already published on Our Lord's Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia, is chiefly expository. In substance the Lectures have been used in the ordinary course of my ministry. They have, however, been remodelled so as to make them a continuous commentary. At the same time, I have purposely retained many passages of devotional and practical import. Indeed, I have been mindful throughout of Bengel's direction : "Te totum applica ad textum ; rem totam applica ad te." I am persuaded that the mingling, within due limits, of the homiletical with the expository is the most profitable way of studying Scripture.

The volume is the product of study, carried on at intervals through several years. It has therefore been impossible for me to trace in all cases the hints received ; but yet I have endeavoured to acknowledge all indebtedness to others. The growth of exegetical Literature is in itself an interesting study. Dr. Mark Pattison (*Life of Isaac Casaubon*, p. 515) has said : "The school commentaries of our day contain the result of four centuries of research ; what one has overlooked another supplies." Much more may it be said of New Testament commentary that it is the result of all the

Christian centuries. It is the structure, still rising, which every age and countless students have combined to rear.

I have made use of most of the commentaries on these Epistles, which English and German theological literature supplies, as well as such side-aids as were within my reach. I trust, however, it will be apparent that I have tried to subject the course of the apostle's thought to the scrutiny of an independent judgment.

I feel it needful to add, that while these Lectures profess to supply in their own way a commentary, the commentary is in no sense scientific or complete. Many questions of historical and theological and critical interest have been only partially discussed. Even such questions as are prominent in these Epistles have been discussed not in all their aspects, but only in the particular aspects in which they there present themselves. I have carefully refrained from going beyond this. Personally, indeed, I feel most attracted to whatever in these Epistles throws light upon the character of the apostle and the varied duties of the Christian life.

The notes and illustrations appended are offered, not as having any completeness in themselves, but as selections from material which has gathered around the subject in the course of reading and study. They do not occupy much space, and they may prove useful to some in the way of suggestion. As for the most part they appeal to the narrower circle of professional readers, I have allowed all quotations from

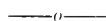
the Latin and Greek and German to appear untranslated. I believe this, all things considered, to be the more satisfactory course.

The book as a whole, however, is designed for general readers. It may serve to interest in these Epistles some who might be repelled by a formal commentary, and may thus lead them to learn in their own experience that there is no more pleasant and profitable study than that of carefully tracing the course of apostolic thought and argument, and applying the lessons thereof to their own minds and hearts.

I have to thank my brother, the Rev. M. B. Hutchison, M.A., of Lincoln College, Oxford, Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, for careful revision of the proof-sheets, and for many useful suggestions.

AFTON LODGE, BONNINGTON,
December 1, 1883.

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FIRST THESSALONIANS.

LECTURE I.

“Paulus war der Erste, der, indem er Christum verkündigte, zugleich Christliche Theologie predigte.”—ROTHE, Stille Stunden.

“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 THESS. i. 1.

IN the Gospels, the fourfold memoirs of our Lord and Master, we see laid down the broad and firm foundations of all Christian truth. The whole structure of Biblical Theology rests thereon. In the Epistles, especially those of St. Paul, we see that structure gradually assuming shape and rising towards its completion. Christ Himself could not, during His personal ministry, declare all that it was needful for His Church to know. He said to His immediate disciples,—and His words were the utterance of mingled compassion and reproof, of encouragement and promise,—“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” He thus led them to look for further illumination—the opening up to their minds and hearts of the “many things” concerning Himself and His kingdom, which as yet were hidden from their view. In accordance, then, with the expectation which He Himself taught them to cherish, Christ’s people turn to the Epistles as giving new significance to the Gospels. Thus emerging, as it were, from the perplexities—the mysteries which gather around the facts of His life, and

death, and resurrection—they can, with the eye of the understanding enlightened, get glimpses of

“The mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops, where is the throne of truth.”

As Paul stands acknowledged as the great central figure of the Apostolic Church, overshadowing, it may almost be said, the prominent figures of Peter and John, so his Epistles take foremost rank as treasure-houses of Christian doctrine.

His two Epistles to the Church of the Thessalonians are the earliest of a series of letters whose influence on Christian doctrine and practice has been felt in ever-increasing measure throughout the history of the Church, and can never cease to be a moulding power in all its future development. In the whole group of Pauline Epistles we feel that we are introduced into a new sphere of thought and experience, and yet one which is the necessary complement of that of the Gospels. As Canon Mosley puts it, “In his language Christ has left the historical sphere of the Gospels, and has entered into the human soul as its peace, righteousness, justification, and redemption” (*Lecture on St. Paul's Teaching, an integral part of Holy Scripture*). In the free and familiar utterances of these apostolic letters, in the mingling of prayers and thanksgivings, of reproofs and warnings, of encouragements and directions, we never fail to learn that if Christ Jesus be aught to us, He must stand in the closest personal relation to our individual souls.

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are not the least interesting and instructive of the Pauline writings. Baur, indeed, in his assault upon their authenticity, has asserted that “in the whole collection of the Pauline Epistles there is none so deficient in the character and sub-

stance of its materials as First Thessalonians," and that "a closer view of the Epistle betrays such dependence and such want of originality as is not to be found in any of the genuine Pauline writings." This position of the Tübingen school, with the whole array of arguments in support of it, has been well contested and overthrown by more than one critic, and very signally by Jowett and Lünemann. They have, with no common acuteness, vindicated the claim of these Epistles, against all opponents, to be considered the genuine work of Paul. So far from internal evidence pointing to their spuriousness, there are Pauline characteristics woven into the very tissue of the thought and expression. These Epistles, further, are more than usually rich in the insight which they afford into the apostle's own mind and heart. They set him before us as "a man of ardent *inward* life, who, living 'in weakness, and fear, and much trembling,' yet had the gift of using his ardours and his fears alike as means of persuasion to others" (*Essays, Theological and Literary*, J. H. Hutton, i. p. 299). In these Epistles, again, the simple common aspects of Christian ethics are with great amplitude and clearness expounded and enforced. Above all, their whole teaching circles around the coming of the Lord and the final triumph of His kingdom.

We are fully warranted, then, in accepting these Epistles as those of St. Paul, and as the earliest of his which we have. They belong to that period which the apostle himself designates "the beginning of the gospel"—the very threshold of the history of the Christian Church. They are possibly even the earliest written records of Christianity. This first Epistle was penned at the close of the year A.D. 52, or some time in 53—at all events not later than 54. If this last date

be accepted, it is interesting to notice that it was the closing year of the Emperor Claudius' reign—a year specially memorable throughout the Roman Empire (*vid. e.g.* Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 64) for many alarming portents, which attracted universal attention, and disturbed the popular mind with gloomy forebodings. The prevalent mood produced by these portents, especially in such a city as Thessalonica, may have had its influence even in the consecrated company of Christ's believing people, and may help to account for the general excitement among the Thessalonian Christians, of which these Epistles take so much notice. Catching the general contagion—the current belief that something very wonderful, some awful crisis, was about to happen, and giving it at the same time the colouring of their own Christian faith, connecting it more particularly with part of the apostle's teaching which they had heard but misunderstood—they were straining their eyes to catch, as it were, the first glimpse of their risen and glorified Saviour returning with the clouds as the dust of His feet. They were expecting, with mingled fear and confidence, His immediate appearance; and in the expectation, the duties which pertain to Christian fellowship and to daily earthly toil alike were neglected and forgotten. Their thoughts were dwelling almost exclusively upon the day of their Lord's second coming, and as a consequence the ordinary business of life, with all its obligations, appeared to them of little or no account. Feverish anxiety, rather than quiet unceasing activity, had become the dominant characteristic of their social and ecclesiastical life.

Thessalonica was a populous and wealthy city of Macedonia. As an important seaport, it was the meeting-place of Greek and Roman merchandise, and

consequently a centre of widespread and commanding influence. Renan (*Hibbert Lecture*, p. 29) speaks of it, along with the other oldest capitals of Christianity, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, as a common city, that is to say, "a city after the fashion of modern Alexandria, where all races flowed together, and where the marriage between man and the soil, which makes the nation, was entirely dissolved." Its subsequent history has all along been invested with more than usual interest. Its heroic age, however, belongs to the third century. "It was the bulwark of Constantinople in the shock of the barbarians; and it held up the torch of the truth to the successive tribes who overspread the country between the Danube and the Ægean,—the Goths and the Slaves, the Bulgarians of the Greek Church and the Wallachians, whose language still seems to connect them with Philippi and the Roman colonies. Thus, in the mediæval chroniclers, it has deserved the name of 'the Orthodox City'" (Conybeare and Howson, chap. ix.). At the present day, under the name of Saloniki, it ranks as second city after Constantinople, and as one of the oldest in European Turkey. It has at least seventy thousand inhabitants, of whom, as in apostolic times, a large proportion are Jews.

We learn, from Acts xvii. 1-10, how the gospel came to be introduced into this city,—how a Christian Church was founded within it. Paul, with Silas and Timothy, tarried only a few weeks there—certainly not more than six or eight. For three of these he reasoned with his countrymen "out of the Scriptures; opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus is Christ." He was cheered and recompensed by the

conversion of some of these Jews. But his success was still greater among the proselytes. There believed, "of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." These proselytes, having less of prejudice, had more of preparation for the reception of the apostolic message. The Acts of the Apostles tells us nothing further, except that the hostility of the unbelieving Jews issued in uproar and assault. But when we turn to these Epistles, we learn that the apostle's preaching seems to have had its greatest success among the Gentiles. The church is there described as having turned "from idols to serve the living and true God." These words must be descriptive, not of Jews or proselytes, but of heathen. "The apostle may either have laboured among them on other days than the Sabbath, when he went to the synagogue; or he may have for a brief period continued in the city and preached, after the synagogue had been shut to him" (Eadie). At all events, among these idolaters he reaped an abundant harvest. At that age the heathen religions were beginning to expire amid universal corruption. Society was dissolving in impurity. But just because matters were at their worst, there were doubtless many, weary and disgusted with the unbroken monotony of evil everywhere prevailing, to whom Paul's preaching was as life from the dead.

" On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."

But even then and there God had His chosen ones, to whom the gospel "came not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Here then was a Church formed. Some Jews,

some proselytes, many heathen, found "joy of the Holy Ghost" in its new fellowship—a little flock—"an execrable sect" in the eye of the world, but none the less "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." It is hardly possible for us to realize in thought the position—the surroundings of this infant community of believers in such a city as Thessalonica. Conflicting habits of thought and life, conflicting interests and aims, must everywhere have been prevailing. Amid the grossest forms of licentiousness there was the difficulty ever felt by these early Christians of keeping themselves unspotted from the world. Amid the ever-shifting subtleties of a vain philosophy there was the difficulty of holding fast the form of sound words. Amid the undisguised contempt of the Gentiles, and the ceaseless, restless enmity of the Jews, there was the difficulty of "standing fast in the Lord." Amid the errors and disorders within their own bounds there was the difficulty of keeping "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." In a word, the world was against them, and they were against the world. Perhaps the most vivid portrayal of the city life of the ancient world in its contact with Christianity is to be found in Canon Kingsley's *Hyppatia*. What is there depicted with so much of lifelike reality of Alexandria in the fifth century, holds to a large extent true, in some of its aspects at least, of Thessalonica in the first.

The only other preliminary inquiry we have to make is regarding the occasion of the Epistle. This is easily answered. Paul had twice attempted to revisit his Thessalonian friends, but he had failed. He had been prevented from personally seeing them. He therefore sent Timothy to make inquiries and report

as to their general condition (1 Thess. iii. 1-5). Timothy brought back a favourable report of their Christian progress and stedfastness, and of their strong, ardent attachment to Paul. On receipt of these welcome tidings, the apostle now writes them in words which reveal the thankfulness and the yearning love of his heart. But as there were certain unfavourable features in the report,—neglect of daily duty because of erroneous views about the second coming; ignorant anxiety lest friends who had died should have no share in the gladness and glory of that advent; wrong views about spiritual gifts, as in the church of Corinth; danger of falling back into the mire of heathen profligacy; proneness to faint in view of the persecution at the hands of their countrymen,—the apostle has also to use words of reproof, correction, and encouragement. These, intertwined with many reminiscences of his personal intercourse with them, are the sum and substance of an Epistle fraught with many similar counsels to us “upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

The Epistle is in the names of Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus. Paul wrote from Corinth (not from Athens, as the note appended to the English version has it). He was not alone there. There were with him two friends—companions alike in labour and in tribulation. Silvanus, or as his name appears in the Acts, Silas, not Luke, as some think (*vid. Journal of Sacred Lit.* 1850, p. 328), but a Roman citizen, and, as his name would indicate, a Hellenistic Jew, and a prominent member of the Mother Church in Jerusalem. He is here placed before Timothy as probably the elder, and certainly the older associate of Paul. Timothy is the other,—the well-known convert, and Paul’s son in the faith. They are mentioned here with propriety along with the

apostle, as having been fellow-labourers with him in founding the Thessalonian Church, and as being now associated with him in Corinth. These two, however, are in no sense to be regarded as joint-authors with Paul of the Epistle. At the most, one of them may have acted as amanuensis—Paul's weak-sightedness rarely, indeed in no other case, permitting him to say, as he did to the Galatians: "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." Paul's thus associating others with himself is a striking instance of the humility and tenderness of his heart. It is also a lesson of the fellowship of brethren one with another,—of the brotherly kindness of one teacher towards another; and last of all, of a teacher's familiar relation towards his scholar, his son in the faith. The apostle, however, may possibly have had a special aim in view in thus associating the names of Silas and Timothy with his own. His so doing invested these, his friends, with an authority and influence which would afterwards stand them in good stead, when, in his absence and acting as his representatives, they might revisit this church or others in the interests of truth. Or, again, he may have purposed in this way to furnish a needed guarantee for the integrity and authenticity of his own Epistles. Silas and Timothy being thus declared present with him, and associated with him in the writing of these letters, could be appealed to in after times if any doubt as to their genuineness arose. There is evidence (2 Thess. ii. 2) that the Thessalonians were exposed to the danger of being imposed upon by forged Epistles—"by letter as from us." In this respect there was a peculiar fitness in the recording of Timothy's name here in Paul's first Epistle, and again in that to the Philippians, his last. Timothy long survived Paul. At

the time of the apostle's death he was still young. He held for many years an exalted station in the church. As Bishop of Ephesus, he may even have been the "angel" of that church to whom the message from the risen and glorified Saviour Himself (Rev. ii. 1-7) is addressed, if, indeed, we adopt this meaning of the term "angel," which, to say the least of it, is very doubtful. What better witness, then, than he to the whole early Christian public of the genuineness of the Pauline writings?

Another point claiming notice at the threshold of this Epistle is, that Paul does not here designate himself an apostle. And why? Why has he here departed from his usual practice? Some say, because in the self-abnegation of his humility, and in his tender brotherliness towards his associates, he wished to put himself on an entire level with them. This reason, however respectful to him, savours of disrespect to them. It seems almost to imply that he sought to allay, or at least that he feared, their envy of his dignity. Nor, again, is the omission to be explained by his not yet having become accustomed to the title, or by his having no distinct rule in the matter. The most probable explanation is simply this, that his office and title were unquestioned by the Thessalonian converts. Whatever others might do, they at least lovingly acknowledged him.

It is to be noticed that the apostolic greeting is sent, not to the brethren, the believers, the saints in Thessalonica, but "to the church." Only shortly before had the gospel been for the first time preached to them. But having individually received it, they at once crystallized into a church—the word here having its local and particular significance, not its universal—"the

Church of the *Thessalonians*.” They became a united company—a visible corporation. “In brotherhood they met, the natural birth and kindred of each forgotten, the baptism alone remembered in which they had been born again to God and to each other” (*Ecce Homo*, p. 136). They as yet had no church building. They probably met together in the house of Jason. But they had a church organization. They had their set times of meeting; they had their several duties. Thus, in the enthusiasm of united service, they, Jews and proselytes and Gentiles alike, “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.”

But “the Church of the *Thessalonians*” is further described as being “in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here we have the distinctive characteristic mark of a true Church. There were heathen assemblies in that city, numerous and powerful. But these existed for the worship of false gods. The only true Church was this recent, despised, persecuted one, which rejoiced in the knowledge of the Creator of heaven and earth as their heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. There was also in *Thessalonica* a congregation of Jews. A synagogue stood there for the worship of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the only living and true God. But its people, by rejection of the Messiah and persecution of His saints, had transformed it into “a synagogue of Satan.” But the Church, which Paul had planted, and which he now exhorts, was “in the Lord Jesus Christ.” It was a *Christian* community. It was “in God the Father,” having been originated by Him, being his possession, receiving the tokens of His favour, and being governed by His laws. It was “in the Lord

Jesus Christ," its members having been gathered together in His name, being knit together in His love, existing for His service, and preserved for His glory (*vid.* Hoffmann, *die Heilige Schrift Neuen Testaments*, i. p. 156). Here, surely, we have an evidence of our Saviour's divinity. As the source of all grace and peace, His name stands co-ordinate with that of God the Father. Not only so; it is not pressing the language unduly to say that in the little preposition "in" we have a testimony to the presence and energy of the Holy Spirit. Its New Testament use with "God" and "Christ" is of marked significance (*vid.* very good note in Webster and Wilkinson's *Greek Test. ad loc.*). Believers are *in* God and *in* Christ Jesus in virtue of their having imparted to them a new nature, new motives and desires and aims,—all having as their centre God in Christ. They have their hidden spiritual life with Christ in God. This radical, all-pervading change is alone by the indwelling and energy of the Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father and from the Son. They are in God and Christ, because the Holy Spirit is in them—in them individually and collectively. Thus the Saviour's words receive their fulfilment, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

LECTURE II.

*Then constant Faith and holy Hope shall
One lost in certainty, and one in joy ;
Whilst thou, more happy power, fair Charity,
Triumphant sister, greatest of the three,
Thy office and thy nature still the same,
Lasting thy lamp, and unconsum'd thy flame,
Shalt still survive—
Shalt stand before the host of heaven confess'd,
For ever blessing, and for ever blest.—MATTHEW PRIOR,*

*Hope, Faith, and Love at God's high altar shine,
Lamp triple-branched, and fed with oil divine,
Two of these triple lights shall once grow pale,
They burn without, but Love within the veil.—TRENCH.*

“Grace to you, and peace. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father.”—1 THESS. i. 1-3.

HERE we have the apostolic greeting in its most usual form. Grace and peace—a blending of the ordinary Greek and Hebrew modes of salutation—“that union of Asiatic repose and European alacrity” which by apostolic use has become invested with a significance infinitely higher than that which was implied in the common civilities of social life. These formulæ of friendly intercourse familiar to the ancient world were like some precious antique vases, prized for their beauty more than for their use. They had become empty of significance, or, at all events, entirely empty of blessing. But now they are lifted up into a higher service—consecrated to the noblest purpose—henceforth brimful of holiest meaning—filled with the very

water of life. Grace, in the New Testament sense, is “quodvis Dei beneficium gratuitum conducens ad salutem æternam;” peace is “Salus animæ, quæ inchoatur in hac vita et perseverantibus in justitia durat in æternum” (Bart. Petrus; Düsterdieck on 2 John 3). Or, to express it in another way, it is grace “quæ est principium omnis boni; peace, quæ est finale bonorum omnium” (Thos. Aquinas; Ellicott on 2 Thess. i. 2). Grace being the peace which God has made with us in Christ; peace, our happiness and joy in God resulting therefrom—grace representing gospel blessing as coming from the heart of God; peace, gospel blessing as abiding in the heart of man; they together embrace the fulness of salvation. These words, as thus understood, fall throughout the ages as the benison of heaven upon the struggling, fainting Church on earth. The right heart-reception of them brings “Pax interna conscientiæ, pax fraterna amicitiae, pax superna gloriæ” (De Lyra). While the universal human heart, because of sin and its companion sorrow, “heaves moaning as the ocean,” this benediction brings a great calm—the very peace of heaven. While the universal human life is disquietude, toil, pain, temptation, dangers, when this benediction falls upon it there is henceforth “no jangled discord, but sweet music in the life.” While the universal human gaze turns anxiously at last to “the skeleton face of the world” and the terrors of the dark and silent land, this benediction is the promise of peace in the city of peace. “The peace of all the faithful, the calm of all the blest, inviolate, unvaried, divinest, sweetest, best.” Such, then, is the all-embracing meaning of this apostolic greeting. It tells us of peace through divine grace—an inward possession, but one that is ever working outward, from the heart into the

life, and ever rising upward, from the poor and imperfect life on earth to the glorified life in heaven.

But this “grace and peace” is “from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” It comes from God the Father as the primal source of all good, and it comes from Christ Jesus as the mediating source. Paul’s favourite name of God, it has been said, is “the God of peace.” Assuredly no other designation of Him brings Him more tenderly near to the heart of man—“the very God of peace.” Peace never can come to, and dwell in, our soul of ourselves. One man cannot procure it for and bestow it upon another. It is a heavenly *χάρισμα*. It is “the peace of God,” and it is ours through “the Lord of peace”—“our Peace”—our Daysman, who reconciles things on earth and things in heaven. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” It is therefore when God is our Father in heaven, by our having the adoption which is through Christ, that we can possess the peace “which passeth all understanding.” Peace! the very word in the original means that which binds, cements together. In the very term there thus lies a testimony to eternal truth, that man can be at peace alone, when all his varied interests and cares are “bound with gold chains about the feet of God.” The multitude of the angelic host praising God at Jesus’ birth sang of “peace on earth.” The multitude of human worshippers at Christ’s triumphal entry into the city of David sang responsive of “peace in heaven.” Peace, then, is the sign and seal of Christ’s kingdom. “Great peace have they which love Thy laws.” Its subjects call

God Father, because they have first called Christ Jesus Lord.

But passing from the apostolic greeting, let us look at the apostolic prayerfulness as it is here depicted. Paul proceeds from ver. 2 to the end of the chapter to record the grateful joy of his heart in the contemplation of the condition of the Thessalonian Church—the Christian graces which were ripening in their midst, as the result, under God, of his teaching—the good example they were showing to others, and the good report they had among the brethren. “Making mention of you *in our prayers*,” he says (ἐπὶ=at the time of, and in connection with them, Jowett). The apostle’s life was one of unexampled activity. There rested upon him the care of the infant churches. His many journeyings, his labouring with his own hands, his unwearied exertions for the good of others’ souls—these stand out before us in every page of his biography. But he was not, as some in such circumstances might be deluded to think, too busy to pray. The busier the servant of Christ is, the more prayerful he needs to be. Work, to be in the right sense successful, must be carried on in the spirit of devotion. The arms of the Church, and of each individual soldier in “that war in which there is no discharge,” are prayers. The Church militant is also the Church suppliant. Devotion and labour are but the two sides of the renewed life which is one. With the word the preacher influences the world; with prayer he influences heaven. The clause seems to intimate that, in Paul’s case, not only was prayerfulness the prevailing atmosphere in which he lived and moved, but he had also his stated, definite times of prayer. In the distribution of his busy hours he had his seasons for private devotion. This with

him was "a very deliberate and serious business—he had rules on the subject, and he strove, by God's help, to keep those rules" (Howson, *Char. of Paul*, p. 161). In a word, his religion was a life, and the heart of it was prayer. It was said of him at his conversion, "Behold, he prayeth," and ever afterwards the words held good. But once more. In Paul's prayers there was one element never absent. There was always thanksgiving. "We give *thanks* to God *always*." And it is not too much to say, that no prayer can be complete and accepted if this element—this inseparable adjunct—be wanting. When we draw near to God, grateful acknowledgment of past mercies must blend with earnest petition for future. It has been justly observed (Wordsworth on Luke xvii. 19) that this thanksgiving is peculiarly a characteristic of Christian prayer. "There are some prayers in Homer's poems, but how few thanksgivings!" The Gentile world, whatever its relation to the unknown God, "glorified Him not, neither were they thankful." It is far otherwise with the Christian Church—the consecrated company of God's believing people. They know their covenant God as their Benefactor. They know that "every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." They feel that while the stream of blessing is ever flowing to men through human channels, it has its source in God alone. To Him, therefore, rising beyond all secondary causes, does the ceaseless thanksgiving of their hearts ascend.

But there is yet another aspect of the apostle's thanksgiving here which claims our special notice. It is thanksgiving to God on behalf of others. "We give thanks to God always *for you*." His gratitude springs from his loving contemplation of the gifts and graces

which he sees in others. He thus appears fulfilling his own precept, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." He thus appears as seeking to fulfil his Master's intercessory prayer "that they all may be one." There is a very needful lesson for us here. While prayer for others—for one another—is common, thanksgiving for others is very rare, even in the Church of Christ. Yet the one implies the other. If it be indeed a duty and a privilege to supplicate God for the good of our fellow-Christians, it must equally be a duty and a privilege to praise Him when our prayers are heard. There is a brotherhood in true religion.

"With true Christian hearts,
Their mutual share in Jesus' blood
An everlasting bond imparts
Of holiest brotherhood."

This community of interest must ever manifest itself in joyful thankfulness before God in view of one another's welfare—above all, in view of one another's soul-prosperity. In every grace shining forth in the character and conduct of the brethren, the whole household of faith rejoices that God is magnified. Once more, it is to be noticed that this ceaseless apostolic thanksgiving was in behalf of *all* in the Thessalonian Church—"for you *all*." It is not necessarily implied thereby that all without exception were indeed and in truth believers—that the gospel had come with power—with saving grace to each individual heart. A passing survey of the Epistle would forbid the supposition. Doubtless there were there, as elsewhere, professions belied by practice—forms of godliness which denied its power. Yet none the less the apostle would not be scrupulously careful, in such a connection as this, to draw the line

between the two classes. It is enough for his present purpose to express his gratitude in regard to all,—they appear before his spirit's eye as one company, with common privileges, and work, and aspirations,—all within the influence of a preached gospel, and more or less profiting by it.

In this glimpse which, in the beginning of his earliest Epistle, is opened to us into the apostle's heart,—this portrayal of himself as giving thanks for his converts at a throne of grace, not in any spirit of undue flattery, but in hearty loving recognition of their spiritual state, and in the earnest desire for their further progress,—in this we have him set before us like his Lord and ours. He has much to say by way of reproof and correction, yet he will begin his Epistle with praise. His gentleness will precede his severity. He will commend before he rebuke. So, too, is it with the Epistles to the seven churches of the apocalyptic vision—messages as they are from the very glory of the Saviour's throne. So, too, should it be with us. Let this same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus.

But we have now to examine what it specially was in the Thessalonian Church that called forth the apostle's thanksgiving and praise. Ver. 3 gives the ground of his commendation. "Remembering without ceasing." It was a memory the fragrance of which pervaded his whole life, the comfort of which sweetened all his trials. It was the remembrance of "their faith, and love, and hope"—the three graces of the renewed life, never wanting therein, never separate, yet ever distinct. Let us try to distinguish them. "Faith hangs on the word of promise, love on that God who gives, hope on the promised inheritance. Faith receives and has, love gives, hope waits. Faith makes the heart firm, love

makes it soft, hope expands it. Faith holds fast to what it has received, love gives up what it has received, hope triumphs over what is wanting. Faith capacitates us for dominion over this world, love for ministering to this world, hope for renunciation of this world. . . . Faith is the confidence in what one hopes for; love, the proof of this, that one has faith; hope, the taking possession, before we have reached the goal, of that which we have learned by faith to love and to yearn after. Faith is what it ceases to be in sight; hope is what it ceases to be in full possession; love is that which it never ceases to be, for God is love" (Harless, *Christ. Ethics*, Lec. ii. § 19). These graces, when the apostle speaks of their value, assume very naturally a different order. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." "Faith is child-like, hope is saint-like, but love is God-like" (Eadie). But these graces, in the connection of the passage, are described not as what they are in themselves, but as they manifest themselves in the life. Faith had its work, love its labour, hope its patience. These are the outward embodiments—the garments which we see them by. It is these which the apostle unceasingly remembers. It was "a faith," he would say, "which had its outward effects on your lives; a love that spent itself in the service of others; a hope which was no mere transient feeling, but was content to wait for the things unseen, when Christ should be revealed" (Jowett). Let us look at these more closely. "Your work of faith," that is, the work which faith produces—in other words, the Christian life in its proper development—personal religion, the work of advancing sanctification. Wherever faith exists, it works onward toward this. While it is God's

work in us, it is none the less our own work. In all its parts it springs from faith, it is carried on by faith, and it at length crowns faith in full assurance. This work of faith is the believer's duty towards self. The next, "the labour of love," is his duty towards his neighbour. It represents the hard and exhausting yet cheerful toil which he is willing to undergo in ministering to others, and, if need be, in suffering for them. In the early Church, despised and persecuted alike, this self-sacrificing toil of love would naturally assume a prominence peculiarly its own. But there are after all no ages and no conditions of the Church's existence in which it is not needed and in which it is not to be found. Love is "infused by God and effused in good works." Every Christian exhibits that "*gemina caritas*," as the old Latin hymnology calls it—that twin love, by which Christ Jesus is loved for Himself, and our neighbour in Him and for His sake. The third clause, "patience of hope," represents duty in reference to the future and towards God—manly endurance under every form of trial, and stedfast expectation of a happy issue out of every trouble, when at length "the just and gentle Monarch shall come to terminate the evil and diadem the right." The child of this world—he who seeks his only substance in it, speaks too truly, when at last he declares as Heinrich Heine did, out of the bitterest experience, "Hope is a beautiful maiden with child-like countenance, but with withered breasts." But the children of the kingdom show by *their* patience that theirs is a hope which cannot make ashamed: it is ever young, it is ever sustaining, it is ever fruitful.

We have not yet traversed the whole delineation of these apostolic graces. They are represented, all of them, as existing and proving their existence "in our

Lord Jesus Christ." This clause in its reference is most closely connected with hope, but we may possibly hold that it is not confined to "the patience of hope," *i.e.* of the Saviour's second coming. It throws back its light upon all. All three "proceed from Him as their origin, and tend towards Him, and terminate in Him as their end" (Wordsworth). Without Him they could never have come into existence. Without His sustaining and guiding grace their existence would cease. They are fruits of the new life. They are seen only in those who are in Christ Jesus "God's husbandry."

Yet again, they exist and prove their existence "in the sight of God and our Father." The connecting of this clause with the "remembering without ceasing," as do Eadie and others, making it to mean solemn prayer and earnest thanksgiving in the presence of God, is not the view which most readily commends itself. It seems more natural to take it as one of the apostle's sentences which (as Jowett well puts it) "grow under his hand, gaining force in each successive clause by the repetition and expansion of the preceding," each adding some new feature to the delineation of the Christian graces. These exist, grow, and come to perfection in the sight of God, *i.e.* in the conscious realization of the divine presence. Everything, good and evil alike, it is true, is in God's sight. "He is about our path and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways." Even worldly men—men utterly unspiritual—feel at times that "all around the heavens are watching with their thousand eyes." But the thought brings no peace, no joy to their hearts. God is not in all their thoughts as their Father in heaven. It is otherwise with the new man in Christ Jesus. The realization of the divine presence is "the central thought of his

whole life. All the graces of his character spring from that one root. Just as all life, animal or vegetable, forms round a nucleus, a centre, a mere point or speck at first, but containing the germ of the animal or plant which is developed from it, so the spiritual life of the believer all forms itself from this one centre, the realization of the presence of God" (Goulburn, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 207). "I am the Almighty God; walk *before Me*, and be thou perfect," that was the command given to the father of the faithful. It has its abiding meaning for all his spiritual seed. Wherever they are, they are to feel that they are before God. Faith, love, and hope can exist alone before God, and God as our Father in heaven reconciled, in the consciousness of His presence, in obedience to His law, in trust in His guidance.

In conclusion, our exposition is in every part of it especially practical. The lessons hardly need to be suggested. The apostolic greeting suggests the inquiry, and as a congregation and as individuals we have to answer it—Is God's grace in Christ Jesus accepted by us, and is His peace the sure possession of our souls?

The apostolic thanksgiving suggests an example which it must be ours to imitate. Constant giving of thanks to God, that is a priestly function which every believer must discharge; that offering must be laid on the altar of every renewed heart. Not at times only are we to thank God in our prayers on behalf both of ourselves and of others, but evermore. One of the old Puritans has said, "Grace (*i.e.* gratitude) is like a ring without end; and the diamond of this ring is constancy" (Adams' *Serm.* i. p. 124).

And as for the apostolic graces, faith, and love, and hope, with their several manifestations in work, toil,

and patience, these suggest to us our duty and our dignity, till at length patience have her perfect work. It is truly blessed to exemplify these “in our Lord Jesus Christ,” and “in the sight of God and our Father.” We thus have heaven’s approving smile, a pledge and a foretaste of that heavenly rest, where toil and patience will be no longer needed, for they pertain to earth, where hope will be changed into sight, where love alone will remain, and the work of love will be true happiness and perfect peace. In view of all this let us be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,—faint yet pursuing,—knowing that at last we shall enter into the peace of Heaven.

LECTURE III.

"The fundamental proposition, that the converting, enlightening, sanctifying activity of the Holy Ghost is indissolubly connected with the operation of the Divine word, is a precious jewel of the Evangelical Church."
—J. MÜLLER in Oosterzee's *Christian Dogmatics*.

"Nihil magis admirabile, quia nihil magis natura contrarium est, quam in tribulatione gaudere. Solent enim afflicti plorare, murmurare, queri, desperare: sed Spiritus Sanctus, qui natura superior est, et per tribulationes, bona cœlestia et divina repromittit, efficit, ut homo hæc bona sibi proponens in tribulatione, quo magis affligitur, eo magis gaudeat."—CORNELIUS A LAPIDE *in loc.*

"Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we shewed ourselves toward you for your sake. And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."—1 THESS. i. 4-6.

THE apostle follows up what he has said about his thanksgiving for the grace manifested in the Thessalonian Church. He says: "Knowing, as we do, brethren beloved of God, your election." "Of God" is to be connected neither with the word "knowing" (= *scientes a Deo*, i.e. *ex Dei revelatione*), nor with the word "election." The structure of the sentence and the course of thought alike set aside these interpretations. The apostle alludes immediately afterwards to the ground of his knowledge. He knew their election by the fruits of his preaching in their midst. And to speak of their election by God, would imply that it was contrasted with some other kind of election either expressed or understood. The meaning rather is, that

this church was not only beloved of Paul and his fellow-labourers,—not only “brethren” with them, as in Christ Jesus having the common adoption of their heavenly Father,—but also “beloved *of God*”—His dear children, “accepted in the beloved.” Being a church “in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ,” they are addressed here as “the Israel of the Lord beloved.” And the proof of their being the subject of the divine love is their “election.” The doctrinal significance of the word need not be unduly pressed here. It rather seems to mean in this connection their historical selection (Hofmann) out of the Western world to be the earliest European recipients of the gospel. The narrative in Acts xvi. 6–10 is expository of it. Paul and his companions, Timothy and Silas, “were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia;” again, “they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.” Their course was otherwise determined—accurately defined for them. “A vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” Recognising this calling from on high, he and his friends at once set out “to preach the gospel unto them.” Now Thessalonica being the chief city of Macedonia, this vision was in effect the declaration to the Apostle of “the election” of its inhabitants to the privilege of having the gospel preached to them. That city was to be the first point of contact which the gospel was to have with Europe. The term “election” (ἐκλογή) is a rare one in Scripture, and is absent, except in this instance, from all Paul’s earlier Epistles. It had been used, however, of Paul himself in the vision seen by Ananias, with special reference to his own similar selection by miraculous means as an object of the divine

favour. "He is a chosen vessel (vessel of election) unto Me." It means in both these cases selection for privilege, and also, as of necessity follows, for service—dignity and duty alike. This same election is ceaselessly seen in the whole history of the Church of Christ—one continent, one nation, one city, one family, one individual, called before another. Many perplexities gather around us as we recognise this. The ultimate solution is, of course, to be found alone in the divine sovereignty. We can, however, none the less oftentimes see, at least in part, the explanation. In this case we can. There was a fitness in the choice of the Thessalonians to be a centre of Christian influence—a point from which the word of the Lord might sound forth (ver. 8). Their city, from its maritime position, was a great emporium of commerce by sea. It lay also on the line of one of the great roads of the Roman Empire, and had consequently many inland communications. Thus "*posita in gremio imperii Romani*," as Cicero describes it, it was elected for honourable and blessed service. It was blessed of God, that it might become a blessing to others.

The apostle proceeds to show on what grounds his knowledge rested—his conviction of the Thessalonians' "election"—the fact and mode of their being chosen for privilege and duty. He was fully persuaded of it both on subjective and on objective grounds. The power and assurance with which he and his fellow-labourers preached in Thessalonica, on the one hand, and the eagerness and joyfulness with which the inhabitants of the city listened, on the other, these were to him evidences of divine grace working both in speaker and hearers—proofs of God's having marked them out above others for His favour and service. Let

us look at these grounds separately. Ver. 5 states the first—the way in which the apostle was enabled to preach to them: “For our gospel came not unto you in word only.” “Our gospel” he calls it. This is not the only instance in which he thus speaks of it. There is implied in this designation of it personal heart-possession of it. He who preaches the gospel of the grace of God ought himself to be able to call it “*my* gospel”—good news accepted by his own appropriating faith; a message not merely which he has to offer to others, but which he has also joyfully received into the keeping of his own breast. He must be able to say, “I believe, and therefore have I spoken.” This is the first prerequisite of a faithful ministry; for, as Melancthon used to say to his students, “it is the heart that makes the theologian.” “All religion is in the change from he to thou. It is a mere abstraction as long as it is he; only with the thou we know God” (*Thomas Erskine of Linlathen’s Letters*, p. 164). We must go farther than this, and say that it is only with the “I, my,” that we can possess God’s gospel. But the word “our” here further implies apostolic commission. It defines the gospel not merely, or even chiefly, as the gospel on which his own heart’s faith is resting, and which his own mind is holding fast, but also as that which has been committed to his keeping, that he may declare it to others. Paul thus describes himself and his companions as invested with the office of “the ministry of reconciliation” (on various genitives used with *εὐαγγέλιον*, *vid.* Ellicott on Eph. i. 13). This gospel, we are told, came to the Thessalonians “not in word only.” It did come in word, inasmuch as it was clothed in words. Cornelius was told in a vision to “call for Peter, who shall tell thee *words* whereby thou and all

thy house shall be saved." The gospel treasure is in these earthen vessels. These words further were proclaimed by the apostle's lips. Human instrumentality is employed in that work which in the strictest sense is God's work. But while the gospel was in word, it was not in word only. Often from the lips of good men—often even from the lips of the divine Son of Man Himself, in the days of His earthly ministry—the message of goodness fell ineffectual—a word, and nothing more. Paul had doubtless had his own experience of this sad truth. In places he had previously visited, there were those who had received his preaching, listened to it merely as "a tale that is told," and he felt himself correspondingly straitened. But he delights to record, with that gratitude which is the memory of the heart, that it was far otherwise with his friends—his "brethren beloved of God" in Thessalonica. His gospel as declared to them was "also in power." Not that his preaching was accompanied with aught of miraculous manifestation to attest and confirm it. That is not what is meant. He describes his preaching rather as having had a reality, an energy, an earnestness, a divine power of persuasiveness pervading it. While he spoke to them, he felt that his was no cold and formal performance of duty, but in a very exceptional degree heart-work. He had felt the power of sustaining grace while he delivered his Master's message. It was therefore, as the next clause has it, "in the Holy Ghost." The presence and energy of the Divine Spirit were recognised by him. Such was his sacred enthusiasm, that he felt his own words to be far more than the mere utterance of one earnest human spirit struggling to impress others; to be indeed nothing less than the winged words of the Spirit Himself, the Spirit of all truth, witnessing through

him, in behalf of Christ and His salvation. Hence he further describes himself as having preached "in much assurance," the firm conviction, "the full assurance of understanding" that his message was one from the throne of heaven, the overture of grace, mercy, and peace to the children of men; the idea also lying imbedded in the clause that he spoke with the assurance that his preaching was not in vain, but was lovingly accepted and rejoiced in by his hearers. The apostle, in thus describing the manner of his preaching (for it is this rather than its effects which is spoken of, though, in fact, the two aspects blend into one), is showing himself an example to others for all time. He elsewhere says: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Here, however, we are specially to notice, that Paul is referring to the manner of his ministry in Thessalonica as an evidence to his own mind—a ground for his knowing that those to whom he spoke were elected. He felt that the power of his own fervid utterance was experienced by them; that the Holy Spirit, who guided him in speaking, was inclining them to hear; that the "much assurance" which sustained him, was becoming also a reality to them; so he preached, and so they believed. He knew, therefore, that they were "appointed to obtain salvation." We may learn a lesson here. Every minister at times—it may be very often—feels himself speaking in word only, powerless; unaided by the Spirit; perhaps, instead of having much assurance, oppressed with much of doubt. In such a case he is bound in duty to his Master, his people, and himself, to look within, to search for causes in his own

heart. But he is also entitled to look without; to trace, it may be, the causes of his own feebleness in his hearers. Their carelessness and apathy may largely account for his feebleness and failure. If he would follow the example of Paul as here unfolded to us, he may even in certain cases conclude from his own ineffective preaching to others, that they are not the chosen people of God. In other words, the feebleness of preaching may often be accounted for by the coldness and formality of hearing. Pulpit and pew act and react on one another. The words of Hosea have passed into a proverb. They represent a generalized experience: "Like people, like priest." The apostle further, not content with recording his own personal experience and conviction, appeals for confirmation of what he has been saying about his preaching to the Thessalonians themselves: "As ye know what manner of men we were among you." He hardly need remind them—they themselves knew full well—what he and his fellow-labourers said, and did, and were when they were with them. "It is no self-eulogy, born of self-conceit" (Eadie), this confident appeal. It breathes nothing of this spirit. It is the utterance simply of conscientious honesty. Paul is so highly lifted up above the mean and petty jealousies of everyday life, that even his humility can use language regarding himself, which on the lips of any one of lower nature, would savour of repulsive self-assertion and vanity. But it is noticeable that the words here are more general than the preceding context requires. Paul says not "what manner of *preaching*," but "what manner of men." He calls to witness his whole bearing and conduct, as well as his words. He appeals to his life in all its variety and fulness. So also did Paul's Master and ours. Over

and over again do we find the Saviour of men appealing to His own spotless sinlessness. In the presence of His enemies He could say, "which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Paul could never speak in that way, any more than we can. At the most, he simply asserts the purity of his motives, the self-sacrifice of his conduct, the zeal of his ministering labour. He knew that, whatever his enemies might say, his friends, so far from calling these in question, could never be unmindful of them. Amid manifold imperfection, varied blemishes of character and conduct, he could still unhesitatingly claim that his life as well as his preaching was a witness for the gospel. "Labouring night and day lest he might be chargeable to any," as well as "teaching from house to house," he proved himself in their midst an apostle of the Lord. His person and his office were not distinct, but one. That is the picture, more or less accurate, of every one of Christ's commissioned servants—a faithful steward in all the relations of life. Personal influence in the advancement of Christ's cause is far more direct and effective than mere official. Teaching truth by example must ever accompany and confirm the teaching of it by precept. Recommending the truth will be of small avail, if there be not also a walking in it. An infidel friend once said to Fénelon, the Archbishop of Cambray, after residence with him for a time, and observing the exceeding beauty of his character: "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself." Such is the unwilling testimony often forced from the children of the world to the beauty of holiness as seen in the life of the children of the kingdom. In view of it we have need, each one, to ponder the apostolic injunction: "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."

But Paul adds here, "for your sakes." He would say, his whole bearing in their midst was in no sense a part assumed for self-interest. It could not be so. Since the risen and glorified Saviour met him on the way to Damascus, and declared him to be "a chosen vessel" (a vessel of election) to Himself, Paul's life had signally been one of self-abnegation. He sought not his own glory, though glory sought him, and crowned him for evermore. He sought not his own ease, nor did he ever find it till he entered into rest. He sought not his own interest. He seemed ever to be setting it aside, till at last he reached "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He did and suffered all for the sake of others. His exertions had this one aim, to win men to the kingdom of Christ. He sought the glory of his Lord, and the joy of his own soul, in the salvation of his fellow-men. "For your sakes," therefore, he says, thus identifying his life with theirs in their spiritual good.

We have thus a natural transition to the other evidence adduced for Paul's knowledge of the election of the Thessalonian Church—their selection for privilege and duty. The first was subjective, the freedom, and fulness, and power in the Holy Ghost with which he felt he had preached to them. The other, as it is set before us in ver. 6, is objective, the eager, joyful readiness with which they had accepted his preaching. And after all these could not be separated. At all events, the first could have been no safe evidence to the apostle's mind without the second following upon it. "Ye," the word is emphatic, ye on your part, "became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." Their having been chosen of God is shown

by their having themselves chosen God's gospel as offered to them. They "received the word," and, as is said in chap. ii. 13, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe." The Holy Spirit, who enabled Paul to preach with power, enabled them to receive his message with all faithfulness of heart. It thus became "*their* gospel" as well as Paul's. But what is meant by "Ye became followers (imitators) of us and of the Lord"?—"Of us whom ye observed and knew, and of the Lord whom we preached and taught" (Webster and Wilkinson). In what respect—in what point did this following, this imitation consist? Not in their reception of the truth. They might be imitators of Paul in that, but they could not be of Christ Jesus. He is Himself the Personal Truth, and as such He came to men. We cannot speak of His receiving the truth, in the same sense, at least, as the words would apply to us, without at once destroying our very conception of Him as the Son of God—the Word made flesh. The difficulty is not removed by giving a turn to the thought in the way Calvin does: "*Promptitudo recipiendi evangelii imitatio Dei vocatur: quia sicuti Deus liberaliter se Thessalonicensibus obtulerat, sic illi voluntarie occurrerant.*" No, the freeness, the spontaneity of the gospel offer, and the willing acceptance of it by men, cannot very well be thus compared. The point of imitation is simply the joyful endurance in spirit under suffering (Alford), which they manifested when they became Christians. The apostle preached the gospel "in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost." Christ Jesus Himself, indeed, wrought out the salvation which the gospel offers "in much affliction, with joy in the

Holy Ghost." "He for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame"—and here it is declared that the Thessalonians received that gospel and its salvation "in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost." In this sphere of trial, and of spiritual joy in the midst of it, Christ and His apostles and His people are one. Embracing Christ entailed suffering. The Acts of the Apostles and this very Epistle show this—suffering arising from manifold persecutions at the hands of their heathen fellow-citizens, and especially of the Jews, the great and persistent foes of the early Church. But sorrow from without could not destroy their inward joy. Afflictions came from men, but joy from the Holy Ghost (genitive of originating agent). Their reception of the word was in much affliction. This was the outward element of their lives—this formed their surroundings when they became believers. But their reception of the word was *with* joy in the Holy Ghost. The joy, that is to say, was along with the word received—part and parcel of it—an inseparable adjunct of it. The gospel was never yet received, nor can it ever be without the receiving of its joy. Like the apostle himself, therefore, these Thessalonians looked calmly upon present and impending trials, for their joy no man could take from them. "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." They "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Paul therefore would encourage and cheer them—nerve their spirits into greater endurance still. Like *their* Lord Himself and his, they "in this present evil world" both suffered and rejoiced. In the contemplation of this condition of the Thessalonian

Church, Paul gladly, gratefully recognised the evidence—the proof of their election. “Much suffering,” indeed, in itself proves nothing in regard to Christian character and attainment. But “much suffering, with joy in the Holy Ghost,” does. They, of whom this can be said, “bear about in their body the marks of the Lord Jesus”—the sacred tattoo-marks, as it were, of His blessed service and of His ownership, and a pledge of the heavenly reward at last.

Plato makes Socrates say to his friends, as he conversed with them after drinking the poisoned cup: “How singular is the thing called pleasure, and how curiously related to pain, which might be thought to be the opposite of it; for they never come to a man together, and yet he who possesses either of them is generally compelled to take the other! They are two, and yet they grow together out of one head or stem; and I cannot help thinking that if Æsop had noticed them, he would have made a fable about God trying to reconcile their strife, and when He could not, He fastened their heads together, and this is the reason why when one comes the other follows” (Jowett’s translation of the *Phædo*). That is a heathen speculation on one of the great mysteries of human life. The mystery appears intensified in Christian life. The apostle thus describes it “as sorrowing yet always rejoicing.” Yet so far it is explained by that life’s being an imitation of Christ. The believer, like his Master, being in a world of sin, is encompassed with tribulation, but being a citizen of heaven, he is also “girded with gladness.” He hears the voice of loving authority, and he yields to it loving obedience, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” He

knows that the "*via dolorosa*" which he thus has to tread is a path of true joy, for he recognises his Saviour's steps in it. Hence he can "sing in the ways of the Lord," for fulness of consolation will be his at last. Melancthon used to write in his students' note-books, "Kreutzesweg Lichtweg,—the path of the cross, the path of light;" and it was a favourite saying of Luther's, "If Christ wore a crown of thorns, why should His followers expect only a crown of roses?" So far, then, the Christian in his reception of the gospel can understand that strange union, of "much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost." The stream of the renewed life on earth is of two currents. As near Geneva, at the junction of the Rhone and the Arve, the two rivers, though joined, yet appear distinct,—the blue stream of the one and the white stream of the other forming the one volume of water, flowing within the same banks, at least for a time, towards the sea beyond,—so is it with the Christian life. Its stream has two currents, distinct yet united, of tribulation and joy, ever wending its course, troubled and calm, to the ocean of eternity beyond,—

"When good and ill unmixed
Flow on for ever,
Each in its distant channel fixed,
An everlasting river;
Where grief and joy, disjoined,
The true and false entwined,
Each to its destined place,
At the stern sentence gone
Shall dwell alone,
Each on its far-off shore,
And see each other's face
No more."

LECTURE IV.

"As a sweet-smelling ointment keeps not its fragrance shut up in itself, but diffuses it afar, and scenting the air with its perfume, so conveys it also to the senses of the neighbours; so, too, illustrious and admirable men do not shut up their virtue within themselves, but by their good report benefit others, and render them better."—CHRYSOSTOM *in loc.*

"Ergo quisquis in vitæ sanctæ cursu perseverare volet, totam mentem applicet ad spem adventus Christi."—CALVIN *in loc.*

"So that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to Godward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come."—1 THESS. i. 7-10.

THE Thessalonian converts, having received the gospel so heartily and held it so firmly, and having shown the influence which it exerted over their hearts and lives by their "joy of the Holy Ghost" in the midst even of "much affliction," became, ver. 7, "ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia." The whole body of believers in these two Roman provinces, embracing Northern and Southern Greece, with their chief cities of Philippi and Corinth, had heard about the Thessalonian Church, and had learned to look up to it as an ensample. Collectively, for the word is in the singular, they were a pattern to others. Imitators or followers of the apostles, in so

far as these were followers of the Lord, they necessarily became themselves an ensample for others to imitate. This twofold aspect of the Christian life must never be forgotten. Christians individually and collectively are first followers, then leaders,—first imitators, then imitated. They look first to Him who is the Light of the World; they then shine with the reflected lustre, becoming the lights of the world themselves. This is implied in the word used here for ensample (τύπος). It means the impress of a seal—the stamp of a coin. Believers are stamped with Christ's likeness, and thus become a die for others. It is thus that truth spreads. This is the law of its communication and extension. Each Christian becomes himself another word of God,—a living Epistle, a new Bible,—ofttimes the only one the children of the world will read. Example brings home to most minds far more powerfully than precept the lessons of our most holy faith. Thus the word of God not only grows by prevailing, but we might also say (Acts xii. 24), grows and is *multiplied*. But in the case of the Thessalonians it is declared that they were so forward in good works, so conspicuous for their gifts and graces, that they even led the van in “the sacramental host of God's elect.” Other churches looked up to them as their model. “All that believe,” as they turned their gaze upon them, found a new stimulus for themselves. “It requires higher grace, and is a more important duty, to be an example to believers than to the world” (Webster and Wilkinson), and this higher grace was theirs. Thessalonica was, as far as its Christian inhabitants were concerned, “a city set on a hill that cannot be hid.” A noble dignity, a sacred duty, a constant danger, all this is implied in such a coveted post of honour.

This, their being an example to others, is explained and defined by ver. 8, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord" in the region before mentioned. We are to understand by this, not the report of their conversion—the widespread rumour of their reception of the gospel; nor does the clause mean "your bright example became itself a message from the Lord" (Alford). The language is not thus to be explained away. The simple meaning conveyed is, that the gospel which the Thessalonians had themselves received, they also earnestly diffused. By their energetic labour of love, by their missionary zeal, the word of the Lord was as the sound of a mighty trumpet, spreading, as echo-like it repeated itself, far and wide. This is the figure which lies imbedded in the word—a word used nowhere else in Scripture. The allusion may possibly be to the silver trumpets so conspicuous in the services of the Jewish ritual. Or the word may suggest, at least to us, the comparison of this early church with some high watch-tower from which, amid surrounding midnight darkness, swells forth, over town, and village, and plain, the watchman's voice or horn. More appropriately still, the word may summon up before our inner eye some little humble church crowning the brow of an Alpine hill, and from it pealing forth the melody of bells, floating on the undulating air, over valley and mountain, and hamlets and lakes, summoning the children of men to prayer.

But, it may be asked, is it possible to see in Paul's words an allusion to any special and direct missionary service on the part of the Thessalonian believers?—any specific "labour of love" in the way of disseminating the truth? Probably we may (*vide* Laurent in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1864, p. 511). As the fourth verse shows,

they had received an election for that very purpose. Paul, too, urged by the vision of the man of Macedonia, had been specially sent to them in preference to others, just that they might become a centre of commanding Christian influence. Now we have to remember that these two Epistles are the first which the apostle addressed to the Gentile world. Converts from the realms of heathenism needed such teaching; and he adapted it to their need: he nowhere, for instance, in instructing them makes direct allusion to Old Testament Scripture. They needed further, we may be sure, some historical record of their Lord's life—His words and works, His death and resurrection. It is not unlikely, therefore, that Luke's Gospel was prepared immediately for their use. That evangelist was the apostle's companion in Macedonia, and he had been left behind at Philippi. We may hazard the conjecture that he was thus left in order that he might write his Gospel, specially designed as it was for Gentile readers. Now Thessalonica was, from its situation and commercial connections, peculiarly suitable for the work of circulating that Gospel. Without any undue stretch of the imagination, then, we may surmise that "the word of the Lord," which sounded out from Thessalonica into Macedonia and Achaia, was none other than the third Gospel or some part of it. (So substantially Wordsworth, *vid.* his note on 2 Cor. viii. 18. But as opposed thereto, *vid.* Webster and Wilkinson.) In this noble and sacred "labour of love" the Thessalonian Church became widely known and honoured. The praise which the apostle (2 Cor. viii. 18) gave to Luke, for almost certainly the clause applies to him, was also peculiarly theirs, "The brother whose praise is *in the Gospel* throughout all the churches." There would be

many travelling merchants, who had embraced the Christian faith, ceaselessly coming to and going from such a commercial centre. As the Waldensian pedlars of past centuries, and of the present too, wandered over the plains of Lombardy and Italy, carrying secretly many copies of the word of God, and offering them along with their merchandise wherever "an open door" presented itself, so possibly these early Christian traders carried copies of Luke's Gospel with them from Thessalonica, and thus from thence sounded out the word of the Lord.

The apostle has yet higher commendation to bestow upon his converts—his "brethren beloved of God." In the fulness of his heart's gratitude his language seems even to strain the limits of strict grammatical accuracy. He mixes up two constructions. He speaks not only of their *work* in extending the knowledge of the truth to others, but also of that which was the motive power of their activity—their "faith to Godward." (Had he been writing to Jewish converts only, he would probably have said Christward.) This their faith, he declares, was "in every place spread abroad"—every place, that is to say, where there were believers. The report of their personal piety had spread over a wider region even than had their direct exertions for the good of others; not that the apostle himself had been the herald of this their praise (Bunsen), but that it had become the topic of general remark. Paul had ample opportunity of knowing this. He was now in Corinth, a great business centre of the ancient world, where the varied streams of travellers met. Aquila and Priscilla too, his special friends, had just come to Corinth from Rome (Acts xviii. 2). To be known in Rome was to be known everywhere (Ellicott). They then, having

heard about the Thessalonians in the church situated in the capital of the world, would naturally tell the apostle, with all joyfulness and gladness, the good news which was now filling his heart with devout thankfulness and praise. He adds, "So that we need not speak anything." Common report spoke so fully that there was no need that he himself should say anything. Defence of his friends was an obligation he could never set aside. Praise of his friends was a pleasure he could not deny to himself or them. But here in the general commendation both were unneeded. The apostle gives us in these words a glimpse, as indeed he so constantly does in his Epistles, into the depths of his own loving heart. We see there his loyalty to his Master, his tenderness to his friends, his zeal for the truth, and his godly jealousy for his own heavenly reward. This good report, of which he makes mention, he delighted in, because it spoke of the progress of his Master's kingdom, because it spoke of the soul-prosperity of his Thessalonian brethren, because it was a testimony to the divine power of the gospel, and because it proved to him that his own labours were not in vain in the Lord. Comforted by the steadfast zeal of his converts he could say, "Ye are our glory and joy." Here, too, we have a glimpse into the nature of true fame, found where it is not sought, the natural reward of self-denying labour and abiding faith. "Haud semper errat fama; aliquando et eligit" (Tacitus, *Agricola*, chap. x.). These Christians simply in doing their duty

"left their name,

A light—a landmark on the cliffs of fame."

We find the apostle still carrying forward the thought. In his cumulative or chain style of diction he goes on

to say "for," giving the reason why there is no need of his saying more—"they themselves," that is, the people in Macedonia, and Achaia, and elsewhere, "shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you." They did not need to be told about it either by Paul or by any others, for they themselves were always speaking of it, and noising it abroad; and what they thus reported was about "us," that is, the apostle and his companions on the one hand, and the Thessalonians to whom he was writing on the other (Bengel, Lünemann),—how effectual and successful an entrance we had unto you. There is apparently here a reduplication upon ver. 5. He had spoken to them "in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," and as he did so he felt that "a great door and effectual" had opened up before him—a door "opened of the Lord" (2 Cor. ii. 12), "a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col. iv. 3). Recognising abundant opportunities of preaching the gospel there, he had felt that what the Risen and Glorified Head of the Church said to the church of Philadelphia was also said to him, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." He, too, who had opened that door of usefulness for him had also granted him "a little strength" to enter in by it. All knew further how by this his entering in to them with the constraining, renewing influences of gospel truth, the Thessalonians had "turned to God from idols," a backward reference to ver. 6, as the foregoing words are to ver. 5. A description this particularly of the conversion of Gentiles. Paul's success had chiefly been among them: the Jews had refused his teaching. Thus they had become the first-fruits of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, a prophecy of the glory of Christ's Church in

the ingathering of the nations: "Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto Thee the forces of the Gentiles." Observe in the word "idols" the significance of the plural,—many false gods. The gods of the heathen are a testimony to the many different forms which human error may take. But there is one God to whom alone all erring hearts must return. There is one God, one way of restoration to His favour, and need of "one heart"—a united heart in His service. Our prayer must ever be, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name." But this clause is descriptive of the conversion of each individual soul, as well as of the company of those who have been rescued from heathen darkness. The heart of every man serves idols; everything away from God in which he seeks his satisfaction is a phantom, an *image*, not reality. Coleridge has said, "Could we emancipate ourselves from the bedimming influence of custom and the transforming witchcraft of early associations, we should see as numerous tribes of fetish-worshippers in the streets of London and Paris as we hear of on the coasts of Africa." This witness is emphatically true. We have need, therefore, at all times of the parting injunction of the apostle, the disciple whom Jesus loved, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

From some form or other of manifold idolatry every new man in Christ Jesus turns to God as the one blissful centre of his renewed life. Hence the apostle proceeds to define the purpose of this conversion, or turning to God. It is twofold. It is first to "serve the living and true God," and second, "to wait for His Son from heaven." The one clause distinguishes the

Thessalonian Church from the heathen, the other from the Jews. But they do more. They represent the universal Christian life in its two most prominent aspects, service and expectation. It is a life of ceaseless action, because it is also a life of patient waiting. It is a life of "much affliction" in the service of God, because it is also a life of "joy of the Holy Ghost," joyful looking forward to the coming of the "Son of God from heaven," bringing His reward with Him. It is this hope which, on the one hand, gives strength for service and perseverance in it, and it is the faithful engaging in this service which, on the other hand, justifies and consecrates this hope. Service without its accompanying hope would merge into dry and formal routine. Hope without its service—its ministry of love—would pass into indolent sentiment, or into restless and hysterical excitement. But while there is a sense in which waiting in hope is in all ages and in all circumstances one of the leading characteristics of the Church on earth and its individual members, there is no doubt that a more than usual prominence belonged to it in Thessalonica. The whole spirit of these two Epistles shows this. While the faithful there did not in any way lose sight of the Saviour's incarnation, and death, and resurrection,—for these are all implied as articles of their creed,—the "much affliction" of their present lot led them to live much in the future; to look and long for His coming again as "the just and gentle monarch, to terminate the evil and diadem the right." Paul's previous teaching had offered this comfort to them, and they held it fast. Thus the "manifold wisdom of God" has its meaning and preciousness for every type of Christian character and for every circumstance of Christian life. Being "the

common salvation," it is adapted to all, as well as the possession of all.

This "Son of God from heaven," whom they waited for, is He "whom He raised from the dead." The promise of His coming again from heaven can only be held fast along with the assurance of His resurrection. He is "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." He cannot be conceived as coming from heaven, unless He is believed to have ascended thither. And this "Son of God" is "Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come." "Jesus!" the name given the Incarnate Word, "for He shall save His people from their sins;" the name He bore as He tabernacled among the children of men; the name He bears still as Son of Man seated on the throne of His mediatorial glory; the name He will bear as He comes again when every eye shall see Him. It was announced to the men of Galilee as they stood wondering on the mount of ascension. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." While *He* is represented as the *coming* One (ὁ ἐρχόμενος), He is represented as saving His people from the *coming* wrath. To understand this of any particular and predicted local catastrophe in this early history—as, for instance, the descent of the righteous judgment of God upon apostate Israel, the destruction of the temple at the siege of Titus, when Jerusalem perished in "blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke," and the entire abrogation of the Old Testament dispensation following thereupon—is in the highest degree *jejune*. We shall have ample occasion to refer to this view in the sequel; it is enough to say that this cyclone of judgment, of fiery indignation, that passed over Judea,

while it affected, it is true, outlying regions as well, could by no possibility be the "*dies iræ*" to¹ which the apostle alludes in writing to Gentile Christians in Thessalonica. That destruction of the apostate city of David was indeed a manifestation of divine wrath, but at best only a faint foreshadowing of that holy wrath which at length is to be "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" in the great and terrible day of judgment. Now, our Lord is to be waited for as One who is delivering His people from this wrath. Between His ascension and coming again He is thus saving them "by His intercession consequent upon His resurrection, founded upon His death" (Webster and Wilkinson). The wrath to be revealed at the day of judgment is coming, and He is meanwhile rescuing them from it. The work is going on, and at last He will come from the heavens to take them thither, that they may be ever with Himself. While, then, Christians serve God and wait for His Son, He, their kinsman Redeemer, is Himself working out their deliverance. Hence amid "much affliction" they have "joy of the Holy Ghost." They have this assurance, and the possession of it is peace, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." Hence the sufferings of the present are to be regarded no longer as a mere *yoke*, but as a *cross*—a nobler word, speaking, as it does, of following Christ Jesus in suffering, till at last the cross be exchanged for the crown.

The picture presented to us at the close of this chapter, of a united company of believers engaged in the worship and service of "a living and true God,"

and strengthened in their sadness by “the breath of Advent-tide” that hovered around them, in the midst of a heathen population whose idolatry they had for ever renounced, may well be illustrated by a striking passage in Cardinal Newman’s *Callista, a Sketch of the Third Century*. It describes the thick atmosphere of evil that hung over the cities of pagan Rome. It represents a young convert entering the streets of Carthage, “threading its lanes or taking the circuit of its porticoes, amid sights which now shock and now allure; fearful sights, not here and there, but on the stateliest structures and in the meanest hovels, in public offices and private houses, in central spots and at the corners of the streets, in bazaars and shops and house-doors, in the rudest workmanship and in the highest art, in letters, or in emblems or in paintings, the insignia and the pomp of Satan and of Belial, of a reign of corruption and a revel of idolatry, which you can neither endure nor escape. Wherever you go, it is all the same; in the police-court on the right, in the military station on the left, in the crowd around the temple, in the procession with its victims and its worshippers who walk to music, in the language of the noisy market-people; wherever you go, you are accosted, confronted, publicly, shamelessly, now as if a precept of religion, now as if a homage to nature, by all which, as a Christian, you shrink from and abjure.” It was in such surroundings as these that the saints in Thessalonica waited for God’s Son from heaven. They in their earnest expectation of His returning were

“Faint for the flaming of His advent feet.”

LECTURE V.

"He has not learned the lesson of life who does not every moment surmount a fear."—EMERSON.

“ Πνεῦμα Κυρίου λύχνος ἱερυνῶν τὰ ταμειῖα τῆς γαστρῆς.
Ἰδωμεν πῶς ἐγγύς ἐστιν, καὶ ὅτι οὐδὲν λείληθεν αὐτὸν
τῶν ἐννοιῶν ἡμῶν οὐδὲ τῶν διαλογισμῶν ὧν ποιούμεθα.”
—CLEMENT I. EP. AD COR. XXI.

“For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain: but having suffered before, and been shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but even as we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which proveth our hearts.”—1 THESS. ii. 1-4.

IN the first chapter the apostle alludes with thankfulness to the way in which he had been able to preach the gospel in Thessalonica. He appeals, in regard to what he had there done and said, to the testimony of his own personal experience, and also to the testimony of believers in Macedonia and Achaia and elsewhere. He now appeals to the knowledge of his Thessalonian converts themselves. Reverting in thought to the earlier part of chap. i. 9, he says: “For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.” He needs not to speak of what strangers reported. They themselves knew—the memory of their own grateful hearts had stored up that knowledge—that a “great door and effectual”

had been opened up for them, that his entrance by the preaching of the gospel had not been empty, void of earnestness, or power, or success. The apostle lingers over this thought. It is a source of comfort and joy to himself, of praise and thanksgiving to God, and of loving congratulation to the Thessalonian Church. His preaching had always been earnest; but it had not been uniformly powerful. But, in this case, he records how his apostolic labours had been crowned with fullness of blessing. Paul's residence in Thessalonica was a bright spot on which his memory delighted to dwell. Every faithful servant in "the ministry of reconciliation" has similar recollections—can recall times when his preaching was accompanied by a more than usual amount of fervour and assurance. He is happy, when he can also appeal to the memory of his hearers as confirming his own convictions, for it is only when heart speaks to heart that the gospel has its "entrance."

Ver. 2. "But," that is to say, on the contrary, so far from his entrance having been in vain, "even after that," or "although we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention,"—a noble verse. It breathes throughout a spirit of true Christian faithfulness and enterprise—the heroism which pertains to the kingdom of God. "As ye know," the apostle says. They well knew the treatment meted out to Paul and Silas in Philippi just before their visit to Thessalonica. The slave-damsel with the evil spirit of divination, resorting to the river-side oratory in that city, coming in contact with Paul and Silas, had kept testifying, as she cried, to the truth of their mission. The constant repetition of her clamorous cries was a hindrance to the apostle's

work, had a disturbing influence, as he talked to the other women by the river-side (*vid.* Dr. Plumptre in Ellicott's *N. T. Commentary*); and besides, this preaching of the gospel, as in a sense it was, by a spirit of evil, was bitterly painful to the apostle, in whom dwelt the good Spirit of God. It was "a confession of truth by one for whom truth came too late" (Dr. Vaughan on Acts, vol. ii. p. 306). Paul, therefore, restored the woman to her true self. Having exorcised her, he drew upon himself the fury of her sordid masters. A tumult was raised; the apostle and his friend were summoned before the magistrates in the market-place, and were condemned to scourging. Bruised and bleeding, they were handed over to the jailor. They were thrust into the inner prison. "Those who have seen anything of the prisons of the Roman Empire, as, *e.g.*, the Mamertine dungeon at Rome itself, can picture to themselves the darkness and foulness of the den into which Paul and his friend were now thrust: the dark cavern-like cell below the ground, the damp and reeking walls, the companionship of the vilest outcasts. And, as if that were not enough, they were fastened in the stocks" (Dr. Plumptre). Thus, under a false charge, without legal trial, "with the burning sense of injustice fresh upon them, and the misery of present suffering keeping the wound open," they endured hardness. Yet, even then, Paul and Silas were bold. They could not preach to men, but they were free to pray and sing praises to God. Yet all this suffering (which the Thessalonians knew well about, and may have helped even to relieve, binding up the still fresh wounds of the apostle) did not deter these apostolic missionaries from further work. They were not false men, but true. Hence, no

remembrance of sore and shameful treatment, nor any anticipation of its repetition, could make them faithless. They were bold, confident of speech. Their courage stands forth conspicuous on the dark background of their suffering. Now, according to Dean Howson (*Lectures on the Character of St. Paul*, p. 182), it is doubtful whether we can ascribe much of what is called physical courage to the apostle. He says, along with much else which goes to support his view, "we cannot confidently say that there was in Paul any *lack* of physical courage. Yet I doubt how far we can claim him for one of those fearless men of heroic mould whom it is our natural propensity to admire. The mode in which he gives a list of his sufferings (to quote no other passage), in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (certainly no light catalogue), seems to me to imply a considerable shrinking of the flesh from danger and from pain. Such a view, at least (this you will admit), is very consoling to us in our weak wincing under infinitely smaller trials and conflicts." When we remember, then, that Paul was well acquainted with literal fear, actual timidity, shrinkings of the flesh from pain and danger, his moral courage appears not obscured, but in all the stronger, clearer light; we render the tribute of our admiration all the more heartily to his impetuous eagerness and cheerful activity in his Master's service. In view of what he had already undergone, and in anticipation of renewed suffering, he was "bold" in declaring in Thessalonica the whole counsel of God, keeping nothing back. He was all this, too, in the midst of "much contention," that is, much external conflict and danger from his Jewish and Gentile opponents, and also internal struggles. "Without

were fightings, and within were fears." What was the secret of all this boldness? It was his realizing of his message as "the gospel of God,"—good news from God Himself, a message from God. Hence, even in the presence of this world's potentates, as God's ambassador—"a legate of the skies"—he was bold. He relied on his credentials. He was emboldened by the thought of the trust committed to him. He spoke not his own things, but "the oracles of God." Thus his courage triumphed over his fear. Archbishop Whately once said, when a friend asked him whether he did not feel nervous about preaching, that he *dared* not: for nervousness implied thoughts of oneself, when we ought only to be thinking of God's message. It is in this way that Christ's servants become "bold in our God"—unconscious of self, because conscious of His presence, and relying upon His strength. It is the inner union of the soul with God which gives true confidence. The right fear of God delivers from all other fear. This boldness, then, which is the characteristic, more or less marked, of all God's faithful people, is the result of divine grace strengthening natural weakness. God-given faith is the secret of all Christian courage. All witnesses for Christ Jesus need this boldness. Gurnal has well said, "a minister without boldness is like a smooth file, a knife without an edge, a sentinel that is afraid to let off his gun. If men will be bold to sin, ministers must be bold to reprove." Neither regard to personal ease or interest on the one hand, nor regard to tenderness for the feelings and opinions of others on the other, must destroy, or even restrain, that boldness of speech, which is becoming in those who declare "the gospel of God," and to whom individually, as well as to Moses,

the divine promise is vouchsafed, "Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Thus self-reliance is found in relying upon God.

The Church has never failed to exhibit instances of the boldness of speech (*παρρησία*) which the proclamation of the gospel demands. Motley in his *Dutch Republic* has preserved for us one of the most signal of these. He tells us of the young Francis Junius, the pastor of the secret French congregation of Huguenots at Antwerp, how, when surrounded by the terrors of the Inquisition, his courage rose all the higher. "On one occasion he preached a sermon, advocating the doctrine of the Reformed Church, with his usual eloquence, in a room overlooking the market-place, where, at the very instant, the execution by fire of several heretics was taking place, while the light from the flames in which the brethren of their faith were burning was flickering through the glass windows of the conventicle." All such faithful witnesses can say with Paul, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power."

The apostle further declares that he thus confidently declared the gospel to his Thessalonian friends, "for," ver. 3, "our exhortation was (rather *is*—he is describing its habitual characteristic) not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile." "Our exhortation." There is much implied in the choice of the term to represent the apostolic ministry of the word. It means more than simple teaching. It is teaching tinged with emotion—"passionum dulcetudine tinctum" (Bengel). "It is the earnest, practical preaching of the apostle bringing every motive to bear upon his audience, plying them with every argument, and working on them by every kind of appeal, in order to win them over to the gospel

and to faith in Him who delivers from the wrath to come." This exhortation in the nature of things assumes different phases according to the varying necessities of the hearers. To sinners, careless and defiant, its voice is "flee from the wrath to come." To the awakened it is "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." To the backsliding it is "beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." To the ignorant it is instruction. To the sorrowing it is consolation. To each it offers a portion in due season. The word thus suggestive, as it is, of affectionate counsel and comfort, is specially adapted to the circumstances of the Thessalonian believers. The apostle in the tenderness of his heart yearns over them in their dangers and trials. His sympathy breathes forth even from the very words he employs.

But he is specially concerned, further, to vindicate himself against what appears to have been false charges brought against him by his own countrymen—the Jews "moved with envy." Self-defence, he doubtless felt, was doubly a duty, when there were mixed up with it the honour and the triumph of the gospel of God. His vindication of his teaching takes the form, first of all, of a threefold denial. It "was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile." "*Removet malas intentiones respectu Dei, et sui et aliorum,*" as Bengel puts it; or better still, as Calvin, "*tria quæ commemorat, sic videntur posse distingui, ut impostura ad ipsam doctrinæ substantiam referatur, immundities ad animi affectum, dolus ad modum agendi.*" His teaching, with all its invitations and entreaties, was "not of deceit." It had not its source or its motive in error. The system of idolatry from which his ministry under

God had rescued his Gentile converts was delusion. Sorcery, oracles, omens, were all of deceit. No one could be more ready to acknowledge this than themselves. Yet, doubtless, they were now and again tempted almost to harbour the suspicion that the faith they had just embraced—faith as it was on the man Christ Jesus, who not many years before had died as a malefactor on the cross—might itself be a delusion, a snare. Their Jewish opponents would not fail to be Satan's ready, eager instruments in plying them with such suggestions. They were therefore, we may conclude, not without the need of this apostolic assurance, that thereby they might be established in the present truth. His exhortation, his whole ministry which he had exercised in their midst, had its origin and its motive power, not in the spirit of error, but in "the spirit of truth." In effect Paul says to them what Peter says to those whom *he* addresses, "We have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Further, his teaching was "not of uncleanness," impurity. There may possibly lie in this a hidden reference to the licentious teaching and practices connected with heathen worship. Paul was in Corinth as he wrote these words, and there he could not fail to hear and see much of this impurity. To Corinthianize, if we may so translate the Greek term, had passed into the common meaning "to be licentious." But upon the whole it seems better to assign to the word here chiefly the idea of moral impurity—impurity of motive, such as evinced itself so generally in the character and conduct of the many Sophists who visited Thessalonica. Contrasting himself with these, the apostle would say that his exhortation was in no

way prompted by covetousness, by desire of gain. If in Thessalonica, as apparently in Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 8 ff.), this unjust charge had been urged against him, he could indignantly repel it. He was not "greedy of filthy lucre." He preached "in simplicity and godly sincerity," seeking not their substance, but their souls. Still further, as it was no imposture or error which he taught, and as it was in no impure state of mind that he taught it, so it was not "in guile," with the deliberate intention to deceive, that he carried on the work of the ministry. Even thus early in the Church's history there were "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 13). But not such was he. He could say, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ;" or again, "Not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." In view of these apostolic declarations we may learn that in *our* work of witnessing for Christ the truth must be spoken by us from right principles, with right aims, and in a right way. Thus "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Not satisfied with his disclaiming all wrong, corrupt elements in his "exhortation," the apostle proceeds to describe positively the nature, the manner of his teaching (ver. 4). "But as we were allowed, *i.e.* approved of God, to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak." He claims for himself in these words a divine commission

—not that he or any one can ever be chosen of God to salvation and honour because of ability to stand the test of divine scrutiny. No. That scrutiny, that testing, can reveal nothing but unworthiness. All are found wanting in the presence of Him who is “ὁ παντεπόπτης Θεός” (1 Clem. ad Cor. lviii.)—the all-seeing God. Yet there is a sense in which God does scrutinize His own people, setting aside some and approving others for *special* work. Christ Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, had even in the little band of His devoted followers, the ἐκλεκτοὶ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν—the inner circle of three disciples, Peter and James and John, who were nearest in posts of privilege and duty to Himself. So is it still. There are those who, being proved faithful in little,—in the strength granted from on high, having withstood trial and having accomplished work,—are exalted to higher posts of service, and also to greater exposure to danger. Thus it was with Paul: first proved, then approved, and so entrusted with the gospel. The reward of past labour and suffering is simply renewed opportunity for labouring and suffering the more. “Honos propter onus.” Recognising this truth, all God’s faithful servants say with Paul, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” In view of this commission received from God, Paul declares that he spoke in accordance with it. His speaking was such as became one who had received so high and holy a trust: hence, “not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.” Commendation of men, human favour and benefits, were not what he sought. The desire of these, however innocent and proper within certain limits in itself, was no motive power with him—could

have no influence in moulding the substance or the form of his exhortation. Had he been in aught governed by such lower, and essentially selfish motives, he would have been ranked only with those who in reality, whatever their profession may be, "please not God, and are contrary to all men." To please men is not necessarily, or even usually, to profit them. But to profit them even at the cost of their displeasure is always to please God—that God who "trieth our hearts." We have parallels with this passage, *e.g.* in Solomon's dedication prayer, "Thou, even Thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men;" Ps. vii. 9, "The righteous God trieth the hearts and reins;" and again, the glorified Lord Himself, speaking from the throne of His glory to the Church of Thyatira, declares, "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts." No eye-service, then, dare be offered to Him who "does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradle." The heart is the centre alike of feeling and willing and thinking—in other words, the whole moral life within a man (*vid.* Ellicott on Phil. iv. 7). "*Our* hearts," that is, the hearts of Paul and his companions, Silvanus and Timotheus. The apostle evidently includes these friends of his, but the plural may be meant also to suggest a wider, a universal reference. It is God's prerogative to have the hearts of all the children of men naked and open in His sight. And they are thus naked and open before Him that He may *try* them. The word is the same as that rendered "allowed" in the earlier part of the verse. Yet it does not carry with it the same fulness of meaning. It is "approved" in the first case, as applied to Paul and his fellow-labourers. It is simply "proved," *i.e.* tested, tried, as applied generally in the second. When,

therefore, we remember that God tries *our* hearts, we have also to remember that it lies with ourselves whether or not that trying, that proving, pass into approving, and so into acceptance at last.

Let Paul's motto be also ours, in all the relations of life and its duties, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

LECTURE VI.

*"Hochfhart verdirbts }
Demut erwirbts } alles."*

OLD GERMAN ADAGE.

"Blame I can bear, though not blameworthiness."

BROWNING, *The Ring and the Book*.

"For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: nor seeking glory of men, neither from you, nor from others, when we might have been burdensome, as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: even so being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."—1 THESS. ii. 5-9.

THE apostle is very careful, in describing the relation in which his ministry stood to the Thessalonians, to defend himself against all false charges—all insinuations or suspicions of insincerity or impurity of motive. He was not deterred from his apostolic labours by any fear of suffering. He was bold of speech because he preached "the gospel of God," and because that God who gave the gospel was *his* God, the God of his own salvation. There was no element of imposture, or covetousness, or guile in his ministry. Accredited from on high, he pleased not men, but God. It was enough for him, in seeking the good of his fellow-men, to be *approved* of Him who *proveth* His servants' hearts. In confirmation of this characteristic

of his ministry, he had already appealed to his own personal convictions and experience—to general report—to the Thessalonians themselves. He now appeals directly to God. “For neither at any time used we flattering words.” That is to say, we were not in the practice of using language such as flattery employs. This, first of all, he disclaims. His exhortation was rather the word of simple, unadulterated truth. Had his designs been self-seeking, he would have made use of flattery as one of the easiest keys for opening the door of the weak human heart. “Delicious essence!” thus writes one of the greatest English humourists regarding it, “how refreshing art thou to Nature! how strongly are all its powers and all its weaknesses on thy side! how sweetly dost thou mix with the blood, and help it through the most difficult and tortuous passages to the heart!” This description of flattery is too true. It is emphatically one man’s meanness working on his neighbour’s weakness, for the vilest purpose of self-interest. Hence, whenever its true character is recognised, every noble nature instinctively rises up against it, and feels that the words of the wise man are true, “A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.” Not only this most degrading and loathsome form of flattery is here disclaimed, but also that other and less hateful kind of it, which at first sight may even appear the outcome of goodness of heart—that thoughtless insincerity of men who—

“Paint their talk
With colours of the heart which are not theirs.”

This, too, though it be not deeply tinged with malice, or selfishness, or spurious friendliness, is deeply tinged with sinfulness, and as such is disclaimed by Paul.

Nor did his exhortation partake of flattery by his palliating the self-accusation of the awakened sinner's heart. In the case of many of his hearers, their souls, under the influence of his exhortation, had been doubtless roused to a sense of the reality of sin and punishment. But he did not meet their anxiety and alarm, we may be sure, by laying the flattering unction to their souls that, after all, their inward state was not so bad as their fears would paint it. Nay, it was "sound doctrine," wholesome food, not deadly poison, which he offered them. His teaching had for its aim first to wound, that, like Ithuriel's spear, it might afterwards heal.

It is a short and natural step for the apostle's thought to pass from flattery to that which is the essence,—the very soul of all flattery,—covetousness; that form of self-interest which is sure to show itself in "flattering words." He disclaims, that is to say, in regard to his former ministry in Thessalonica, all pretexts such as avarice employs,—that master lust of the human heart which is never satisfied—

"That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub
Both filled and running"

(Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, i. 6; compare Plato, *Gorgias*, 493, where the desire of man is compared with a sieve or pierced vessel, which he is always trying to fill, but which is never full),—that vice which potentially includes all others (Cato, *de Moribus*, "Avaritia omnia vitia habet"). Among both the Gentiles and the Jews this vice seems often to have appeared among the teachers of the people. In the early Church itself, even in times of persecution, its corrupting presence could be too plainly detected. Suspicions about Paul's

conduct being tainted by it seem to have taken possession of his opponents' minds. Hence his eagerness to disclaim it, and to disclaim it in the most emphatic way. He refuses to allow his fair reputation to be tarnished even by the passing breath of such suspicion. As to the Ephesians, he says, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel;" and to the Corinthians, "I seek not yours, but you;" so to the Thessalonians he declares, "nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness." The word "cloke" here is very significant. In this fallen world of ours there are some sins which men may even glory in,—many, the indulgence of which entails at least little or no shame. But this sin of covetousness is one which no man will ever dream of boasting of. Men, while they indulge in it, always try to hide it. "No man will *profess* himself covetous, be he never so wretchedly sordid within; but he will for very shame cast as *handsome a cloak* as he can over it,—frugality, good husbandry, providence,—some cloak or other to hide the filthiness of it from the sight of others. But filthy it is still, be it cloaked never so honestly. God abhorreth it as a filthy thing. 'He speaketh well of the covetous, whom God abhorreth,' Ps. x. 3" (Bishop Sanderson). It appears then that this covetousness, however often it may evince its presence among men, must have its "cloke," its mask. Were it at once and invariably to kythe in its real colours, even the children of the world would not endure it. It would be loathsome. But the apostle adds, "God is witness." (Compare Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. i. 23; Phil. i. 8.) In reference to the language of flattery, he says, "as ye know." Man can judge thereon. Hence he appeals to his readers. They themselves were good enough judges as to whether

he had ever flattered them. But it is otherwise with covetousness, and its mask—

“Neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By His permissive will through heaven and earth.”

In regard to it,—the hypocrisy of covetousness,—therefore, Paul lays bare his heart before the all-seeing eye. He appeals to God as if he had said, God knows, and what He knows, He will at length testify, so that you too may know, that with no plausible words, but with words of sincerity and simplicity, I preached unto you. This form of solemn asseveration, arising from intense earnestness of motive, and aiming at the highest and holiest ends, is clearly not forbidden in Scripture. What is prohibited by the law and by Him who is the fulfiller of the law is the profane, the flippant, the aimless appeal to the omniscience of God. That is God-dishonouring and soul-debasing. A true man, having respect alike for self and for the name of God—

“Honouring his own word,
As if it were his God’s,”

will never throw discredit upon his own integrity by such unneedful oaths.

But the apostle passes on to disclaim as an element in his exhortation aught of ambition—desire of glory. “Nor of men sought we glory.” This naturally follows upon the allusion to covetousness, for as Calvin has well said of avarice and ambition, “*Duo enim sunt isti fontes, ex quibus manet totius ministerii corruptio*,”—the one seeks to draw to itself the substance, the other seeks to draw to itself the praise of men. But Paul declares that his aim was not the honour of men, but

the approval of God. The scroll on the shield of the man of this world is, "I follow fame." On that of Paul it was, "Rather use than fame." His was the thorn-path of duty. Yet in the end it led to honour too. Whatever of glory, either from the Thessalonians or from others, came to him, he valued only as extending the sphere of his activity in his Master's service. He could say—

" Use gave me fame at first,
And fame again
Increasing gave me use."

But here a difficulty of interpretation presents itself. The apostle and his companions did not seek applause-glory, either of the Thessalonian Christians or of any other church, or of the world, when they "might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ;" this may mean either, weighty in authority, or burdensome in requiring pecuniary support, as Christ's own apostles. The latter, though it be that of the authorized version, is probably wrong. Both the preceding and succeeding contexts seem to require this sense—though we might have been of weight (compare "weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17)—stood upon our dignity and claimed honour as being Christ's apostles. His dignity and glory—the dignity and glory of His message—were in reality reflected on them, His ambassadors. They might therefore, had they been so minded, have assumed the trappings of outward pomp. They might have commanded with the sternness of authority, instead of entreated with the tenderness of affection. But they had not so learned Christ. They could not so dishonour Him for the sake of any so-called honour accruing to themselves. They were willing to give up all self-assertion, all apostolical claims and pretensions,

—no mention is made of these in the opening words of the Epistle,—that they might assert His gentle reign over the hearts of men.

It is worth while here to pause that we may notice what seems to be a conspicuous trait in Paul's character—a keen sensitiveness to the good opinion of others. This appears from the very way in which he so often pleads in self-defence (*vid.* Howson's *Lectures on St. Paul*, p. 74). He betrays, even in his disclaiming all base motives, such as seeking honour of men, a sensitiveness to suspicion more than normal. If this be a correct estimate of the great apostle, do we not feel that so far from falling in our esteem, he is brought all the nearer to the sympathy of our hearts? Jowett has a good note here: "Why should the apostle so repeatedly repudiate the imputation that he sought glory of men? He was one of those who instinctively knew the impression produced by his character and conduct on the hearts of others. What was the motive of this 'vain babbling,' would be a common topic of conversation in the cities at which he preached. 'To get money, to make himself somebody,' would be the ordinary solution. Against this the apostle protests. His whole life and conversation were a disproof of it. It may have been that he was aware also of something in his manner which might have suggested such a thought. It was not good for him to glory, and yet he sometimes 'spoke as a fool.' Rightly understood, this glorying was but an elevation of the soul to God and Christ, or at worst the assertion of himself in moments of depression or ill-treatment; but to others he might have been conscious that it must have seemed a weakness, and may have been made a ground of imputations from his adversaries." It is in some such way as this

that we are to account for the apostle's carefulness to set himself right in the eyes of others—all the more so as wrong impressions about the messenger, haunting the minds of men, were active obstacles in the way of their receiving the message.

But we are still in the middle of the apostle's self-defence. He has hitherto been describing his conduct, especially his ministry, as to what it was not. He proceeds now to show what it really was. He sets before us its positive side. Ver. 7. "But," that is to say, so far from that, "we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her (own) children." As a nursing mother, and her gentleness, so was he, and such were his mildness and tenderness in dealing with his converts. "Among you," he says, as one of yourselves, surrounded by you as my pupils, I showed not the spurious gentleness of flattery, but the true gentleness of an earnest teacher,—more than this, the yearning even of a loving mother's heart. The warmth of his affection forbade the assumption on his part even of his rightful authority. (*Non agebant, quasi ex cathedrâ, quæ Petri dicitur, et stilum curiæ suæ, apostolicum appellat.*—Bengel.) His teaching and whole bearing towards them were suffused with the radiance of his Master's own character—the love which passeth understanding—that love which, turning aside from every form of self-assertion, expends, without lessening, itself in overflowing to others.

"So," he consequently goes on to say, in this manner (*οὕτως*), "being affectionately desirous of you,"—no better rendering of a somewhat difficult word could be given than this,—going out towards you in the yearnings of our love. This affectionate yearning manifested itself first of all in active effort. It was no mere

sentiment, listless, however laudable. It was an enthusiasm which ever burst forth into energetic action. It had led the apostle to "impart the gospel unto them." To those whom he so ardently loved and longed for, he communicated the best gift in his possession—the knowledge of the truth. His love could find its satisfaction in no lesser gift. So it must ever be where true Christian life exists. Yet how often do we see, where other evidences of Christian character are not wanting, affection exhibited in every way rather than in this! How often do we see, for instance, parents bound up in their children, willing to make any sacrifice for them, giving them, at the cost of infinite personal toil and self-denial, worldly comfort, education, eligible openings in life, fortunes—all these, but in criminal forgetfulness neglecting to "impart the gospel of God to them,"—withholding from those whom they so dearly love that which alone can make them happy, prosperous for time and for eternity alike!

But the apostle's affectionate yearning towards his Thessalonian friends showed itself further in self-abnegation—in willingness to impart "also our own souls,"—we had goodwill to distribute, as it were, among you, to each one his share, our very life. The figure appears still to be kept up. Paraphrased, Paul's words mean this: As the mother not only nourishes her new-born child with her milk, but also tends and guards it, and is even ready to offer her life in self-sacrifice for its welfare, so was he towards his spiritual children. He had given them "the sincere milk of the word," and in imparting it he was ready, if need be, to give up his own life—his very existence and all that pertained to it. In their service and for

their interests he was willing to spend and to be spent. No sacrifice was too great for him willingly, joyfully to face, so that the Master whom he served might be glorified in them. He once said in his unutterable yearning over his own countrymen: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Hardly less strong—less emphatic—than these, are his words of tenderness in reference to the Gentiles—these Thessalonians to whom, as Christ's ambassador, he had been sent. This willingness he once more traces to its source, "because ye were (became) dear unto us." His love for them was in the gospel, he loved them for the Saviour's sake; and now, having accepted of the salvation, they became dear to the apostle's heart—very dear, because they were now rejoicing together with him in "the common salvation." Such is, after all, the only firm basis on which true friendship and love can rest.

What a picture have we here presented to us of Paul's character and conduct! As his image rises up before us in its different aspects, from the pages of his own Epistle, we see him clinging, with passionate earnestness, to those who were his friends. That heart of his, which was restless till it rested in Christ, ceaselessly sent forth its love, henceforth sanctified in Christ's love, towards others. Not only so, there are other aspects of His character and worth presented to us here. "What a picture of the true pastor! Not lording it over God's heritage, not one having dominion over their faith, not one who rules, and censures, and

threatens, but just a loving friend; . . . a helper of their joy, the kind father, yea, the gentle mother also of his people" (Vaughan on Acts, ii. p. 329). He illustrated in himself the truth of the old Italian proverb, "The teacher is like the candle which gives light to others by consuming itself."

The apostle, in ver. 9, proceeds to confirm what he had been declaring about the warm self-denial of his love. He adduces instances: "For ye remember, brethren." They themselves knew how his words were words of truth. "Our labour and travail" (or "weariness and painfulness," as the same words are rendered in 2 Cor. xi. 27, but first found in the Geneva Version);—these words are more than once in Scripture found together. They are not synonymous. The one seems to represent work as entailing suffering, the other represents it as painfully wrestling with difficulties. Together they suggest very hard and exhausting toil—work which taxed every energy of body and of spirit, and was practically a giving up of his life for his friends' sake. It was largely manual labour, doubtless tent-making, as during the apostle's sojourn with Aquila and Priscilla. It was also long-continued labour, "labouring night and day," that is, to say, incessantly, not manual labour during night and preaching during day—the idea of long protracted exertion alone is implied. And why all this toil? The answer follows, "Because we would not be chargeable unto any of you." In Thessalonica he refused to make, as he was entitled to do, the support of himself and his companions a burden to any one,— "any of you," seeming to imply that there were individuals among them who would willingly have taken upon themselves the honourable burden of his

support. It was thus that, in the midst of abounding proofs of self-denial and zeal, they “preached the gospel of God.” It was the most glorious of all messages which he proclaimed. It was the noblest and most exalted of all commissions which he held, notwithstanding the outward meanness and the drudgery of his earthly surroundings.

Here once again, and in yet another aspect, does the apostle of the Gentiles stand out before us. It was the saying of Rabbi Gamaliel, “He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a vineyard that is fenced.” The apostle had a trade in *his* hand, and now in the solitary midnight hours it ministered to the necessities of himself and others. It has been asked why, in this case, he set aside his privilege and right of receiving support from those whom he taught. Doubtless it was not because the Thessalonians were too poor to render him aught of aid. There is rather some evidence to the contrary. Still less likely is it that he wished “to keep his body under, and bring it into subjection.” It was not as a religious exercise that he thus laboured. It may have been partly to distinguish himself from the many wandering soothsayers who overran Greece and Asia, “telling some new thing,” and that for the sake of sordid gain. But after all, Paul’s chief reason for his conduct lies plainly expressed in the Epistle itself (1 Thess. iv. 11, and especially in 2 Thess. iii. 6-12). Here it was desirable to show the Thessalonian converts that there is no opposition between the reception of the gospel and the discharge of the ordinary duties of life. There were some in their midst who were “disorderly” and “busybodies,”—ready to eat other men’s bread for nought. By his own labour Paul placed himself in a

position of authority to read these a needful lesson. By teaching and example alike, he could enforce the command to "study to be quiet, and to work with their own hands," and that "if a man will not work, neither should he eat."

Such is the picture of entire consecration in thought, and word, and deed which is here set before us. Let us see that our contemplation of it be fruitful of new zeal and devotion in our own hearts and lives. Thus, whatever may be our burdens,—our weight of toils on earth,—ours will be at last "the exceeding weight of glory" in heaven.

LECTURE VII.

‘Ο ἰγγύς μου ἰγγύς τοῦ πυρός· ὁ δὲ μακρὸν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ μακρὸν ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλείας.—Traditional saying of our Lord cited in WESTCOTT’S *Introduction to the Gospels*.

“Honus propter onus.”

“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and righteously, and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe: as ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory.”—1 THESS. ii. 10–12.

THE apostle having alluded to particular traits of his own character and ministry, as these had appeared in his former labours in Thessalonica, proceeds now to give a general summary of them. He gathers up the several particulars about himself and his associates, and reaffirms them. “Ye are witnesses, and God also.” He had previously made an appeal to his readers themselves, and an appeal also to God, his God and theirs. He now blends these into one—naturally so. He calls the Thessalonians to witness, and God also, because the matter in hand regards both heart and life—the inner state of the heart, and the outward deeds of the life whereby it is manifested. He makes this double appeal because he is speaking of what in part was open before men, and in whole naked before Him who seeth in secret. He is speaking of “things honest, both in the sight of God and in the sight of men.” And what are

these ? “How holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves.” “Holily.” The word represents the side of their behaviour which looks specially towards God. A common Biblical phrase is “holy to the Lord.” The divine command is, “Be holy to your God,” and the announcement is made, “The Lord will show who are His, and who is holy.” The word is found in Scripture applied (*a*) to God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, as infinitely holy above His creatures—“the Holy One”—the source and end of all purity ; (*b*) to angels, as intelligent beings who rejoice unceasingly in the pure light of the divine presence ; and (*c*) lastly to saints, as being sanctified, set apart, consecrated to a holy life by the renewing of the Spirit of holiness. All believers in this sense live holily. With their varying degrees of conformity to the will of God, they are all true men. Their devotion is sincere—their hearts turn towards God, as the flower opens itself and turns to the light of heaven.

“Justly.” This other word represents the side of the apostle’s behaviour, and of that of his companions, which looks specially towards men. It means “righteously.” It defines the believer’s conduct as upright in all its connections and dealings with others. The term is sometimes found applied to God as well as to His people. In reference to the latter, it means that they are just in God’s sight through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to them, and that they, thus standing in a new relation to God, strive to live and act in obedience to Christ’s law of love. We often use the word in a narrow sense, when, for instance, we say of a man that he is just but not generous. But that is an undue and unwarrantable limitation of its proper significance. According to God’s law, no man is really

just who is not also generous, kind, forbearing, helpful, affectionate towards his neighbour. In other words, a man is in the right sense of the term just only when he "loves his neighbour as himself," for that is a debt he always owes, and can never fully pay. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another."

In this case, then, Paul does not say simply that he and his associates had acted honestly, but that they had also acted lovingly, neglecting no duty towards the brethren which Christ their elder brother has enjoined. Such, then, are the special meanings assigned to "holily and justly" here. They can be easily distinguished, and yet they necessarily and constantly overlap one another. It is to be noticed, however, that while they stand together representing two aspects of Christian life which cannot be severed, "holily" stands first, for it is only when the heart is right with God that it can be right in the full compass of its feeling towards our fellow-men. But the apostle, as if supposing it possible that these two words might be thought not to embrace every element of Christian conduct, adds yet another, "unblameably." Its significance is negative, and is on that account all the more comprehensive. The conduct of himself and his friends could not in any respect have the stigma of just blame attached to it. As servants of Christ Jesus, and called to special work in His Church, they gave "no offence in anything, that the ministry might not be blamed." He could consequently, being able to apply these three qualifying words to himself and friends, speak not merely of a good heart and a good life, but also of a good name. And the wise man says, "a good name is better than precious ointment." "Whatsoever things are of good report," these he followed after, for "he who keeps

his life clear from sin, does good to himself,—he who keeps it clear of suspicion, is merciful to others” (Wordsworth on Phil. iv. 8). The apostle is a pattern in all these respects to pastors and people. Yet none the less we have ever to rise from mere human examples, even though they be apostolic, to that which is divine. Christ Jesus is repeatedly set before us in Scripture as “the Holy One” and “the Just One,” and as to blamelessness, He could say, as no others can, “which of you convinceth Me of sin?” And regarding Him the Roman judge could testify, “I find no fault in Him.” It is when His people steadfastly and lovingly look towards Him that they come at length to “be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

Such was the behaviour of Paul and his associates “among you that believe”—that is, in the view, in the judgment of those who were believers. It was in this light that they appeared in the estimation of their friends. More than this the apostle could not assert; for in the estimation of the Jewish and Gentile inhabitants of Thessalonica his character and conduct were maligned—furiously assailed (Acts xvii.). He represents himself, therefore, as turning aside from the reproaches and enmity of the world, to the judgment of those who were his fellow-believers. In their hands his reputation is safe. Even when he seems to be commending himself, he knows that their grateful, loving hearts will not wrong him, or misunderstand his motives.

So intent, so eager is he to justify the purity of his ministry, that not satisfied with the threefold characterizing of it already given, he appeals once more to his readers as to what they personally and individually

knew about it, “as ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his (own) children.” Already had he used the figure of a nursing mother in the tenderness of her self-sacrificing devotion to her children. He now shifts the figure. It is here that of a father, the faithful instruction and training of paternal authority and affection. In both comparisons there breathe forth the warmth, the consuming zeal of apostolic love. There are two points to be noticed in this comparison instituted by Paul between his conduct and that of a father. (1) He could say, as a wise father suits his dealings, both in training and teaching, to the case, the requirements, of each child, so he acted towards his converts—“every one of you.” It was no general relation in which he stood to them. He dealt with each individual soul. He adapted his teaching to each case, giving to “each a portion in due season.” This was evidently the apostle’s invariable procedure. We find him, for instance, reminding the elders of the Ephesian Church in his touching interview with them at Miletus, “I ceased not to warn *every one of you* night and day with tears.” And to the Colossians he says, “Christ Jesus, the hope of glory; whom we preach, warning *every* man and teaching *every* man in all wisdom; that we may present *every* man perfect in Christ Jesus.” It is perhaps worthy of observation here that Christianity has brought out into clearest light, and has assigned the greatest prominence to the worth—the unspeakable value of the individual soul. It is quite a commonplace with us to speak in this way. It was not so—it was far otherwise with the conceptions of the ancient world. The rulers, even the teachers of heathen society thought of men as a body—used them

or influenced them in the mass, but seldom thought of the individual. But the religion of Christ Jesus takes account of each—tenderly deals with each, and thus advances till the number of His people be gathered in. Its foundation rests on individual conviction. Individualism, not multitudinism, is the word to represent the law of its growth. It makes its appeal to each separate conscience, and it is only in so far as it does so that it comes to leaven the whole mass of human society.

But (2) the other point in the comparison here made is, as a father is eager, intensely earnest, in giving his children right guidance and instruction, so was Paul in his yearning care of his converts. As he had described his general behaviour by three terms, so he describes his ministry in a threefold way. He says “Exhorted, and comforted, and charged.” There are different ways in which these may be distinguished; for instance, it may be said that the exhortation is the mere general term, and describes the apostolic teaching as influencing the mind and will, in other words, instruction; that comforting is friendly persuasion, touching the feelings, and so leading the heart to Christ and His truth—consoling and inspiring those who in midst of tribulation were doubting and desponding; and that charging or testifying is adjuring them with all solemnity, as in the sight of God (not as Hofmann represents, “den nachdrücklichen Ernst der Rede, wenn der Redende für das, was er sagt, mit seiner Person eintritt”). Or again it may be said (with Bengel), “*παράκλησις*, hortatio, movet, ut facias aliquid libenter; *παραμύθιον*, consolatio, ut cum gaudio; *τὸ μαρτυρεῖσθαι*, contestatio, ut cum timore.”

Such were the characteristics of the apostle's ministry.

Each one brought under the range of his influence was dealt with in the way most suited to his case, that so all might “walk worthy of God, who hath called them unto His (own) kingdom and glory”—one member of the church needing exhortation, another comfort, a third solemn charging. But the end aimed at in them all is one and the same—a walking worthy of their calling from on high.

By walking we are, of course, to understand the whole character and conduct of a man—his whole inner and outer life. The figure implies energetic movement, and movement in the way of progress. Hence in the fullest sense it represents the activity of the man who is renewed in the spirit of his mind—the man who walks with God. It is worthy walking only when the command has been heard and obeyed, “walk before Me, and be thou perfect;” “as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Such walking is “worthy of God.” It is activity of heart and life, becoming those who are God’s “peculiar people”—worthy of their dignity as the objects of the divine calling. The word “calling” is a favourite one with Paul. It means in his usage of it not merely God’s invitation, but that invitation as accepted, hence effectual calling. His Church is called out of the bondage, and corruption, and degradation of Egypt into the light and liberty of the gospel. We must then walk worthy of the dignity of such a calling by living as the Lord’s freedmen. But this calling, represented always by the apostle as ceaselessly going forth to His people on the part of God, is “unto His own kingdom”—the dispensation of grace—the privileges and responsibilities of His Church on earth—the kingdom of heaven which Christ Jesus came to earth to procure for men and to

preach to them—"the kingdom of My Father," as He calls it. We are then to walk worthy of the duties which pertain to this kingdom. We are to exhibit faithful allegiance to Him who is King—joyful obedience to its laws—affectionate interest in all its subjects—valiant fighting in its service—co-operation in all good work, so that the words of Tacitus in regard to the ancient Britons may not be verified in Christian effort: "ita singuli pugnant, universi vincuntur," but rather the words: "In ædificio quippe lapis lapidem portat. Quia lapis super lapidem ponitur, et qui portat alterum, portatur ab altero, sic in sancta ecclesia unusquisque et portat alterum et portatur ab altero, nam vicissim se proxime tolerant, ut per eos caritatis ædificium surgat" (Gregor. M. in Ezech. ii. 2, 5, in Mone, *Hymni Latini Medii Ævi*, vol. i. p. 435). But the apostle adds "and glory." The meaning is not simply "His glorious kingdom." The idea is rather this, that while God is calling His people to the dignity and duties of His own kingdom, He is also at the same time calling them to its future rewards. Their destiny is glory. All true members of Messiah's kingdom are heirs of this eternal glory. This glory is what Paul elsewhere calls "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." There is a propriety in the "glory" being added by the apostle here. Hofmann says well: "wo Gott βασιλεύς ist, da geschieht kein anderer wille, als der seine; wer ihn aber thut, der hat Theil an der δόξα dieses βασιλεύς; um Beides auszudrücken, verbindet der Apostel beide Begriffe, welche also nicht vermengt sein wollen." This glory we even here know something of. One of its elements—its chief one indeed—is likeness to Christ Jesus. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall

appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is." This glory then will be "the beauty of holiness." Another element in it is sharing Christ's sovereignty. His promise is, as uttered from the throne of His glory, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne."

Believers walk worthy of this destiny of glory when they lovingly look forward to it—when they, in longing of heart,

"Send hope before to grasp it,
Till hope be lost in sight."

And we can rightly look forward to it only when we strive in divine strength to prepare for it. In a word, we are called first of all to "the kingdom and patience," and then to "the kingdom and glory." The one belongs to earth, the other to heaven. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

This twelfth verse, closing a section of the Epistle, very naturally closes it eschatologically. This glory the saints enjoy at the coming of the Lord, when He shall "be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe."

LECTURE VIII.

"Synagogas Judæorum, fontes persecutionum."

TERTULLIAN, *Advers. Gnost. Scorp.* x.

*"Why should the unburned, though burning bush,
Be angry as the crackling thorn?"*

COWPER.

"And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe. For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins alway: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."—1 THESS. ii. 13-16.

BEGINNING a new paragraph, in which he still further assures the Thessalonians of his affectionate interest and sympathy, the apostle says, "for this cause"—that is, not because it is God who is calling you unto His kingdom and glory, but, seeing we have been showing such ardent interest in you in all our efforts, a motherly love in regard to your conversion, and a fatherly anxiety in regard to your Christian conduct. "We also thank God without ceasing," we, that is, as well as ye yourselves. And thanks are rendered that Paul's labours were met by the Thessalonians in the same spirit as that which had prompted these labours. "The word of hearing" (compare *Predigtwort*, *Botschaftswort*, *Lange*)—the word as it was preached

by the apostle and his coadjutors—possibly the spoken word here, in contrast with the written word, the third Gospel, which, as we have remarked on chap. i. 8, had possibly been entrusted to the keeping of the Thessalonian Church. This word, then, the Thessalonians heard from the lips of the apostle and his companions. But it was also God's word, though preached by them, and hence they, when they *received* it, *accepted* not the word of men, but "as it is in truth, the word of God." They gladly entertained and welcomed it, grasped it, and held it fast as God's gift. And, as such, it is described further "which" (not who, applying to God, but which, referring to God's word), "also," that is, in addition to its being God's word, or perhaps better, in "contrast with its inoperative nature when merely heard and not believed" (Ellicott), "effectually worketh in you that believe." Being "mixed with faith," it was a power not merely among the Thessalonians, but also in each believing heart. The word fell upon the ear from human lips, but it entered the heart as a divine power. These hearers felt their need of such a message, and they accepted it in childlike simplicity.

"Und was kein Verstand der verständigen sieht,
Das übet in Einfalt ein kindlich Gemüth."—SCHILLER.

The bearing of this verse on the doctrine of the inspiration of the spoken word of the apostles, and of the New Testament as a whole, is very evident. This effectual working,—this energy,—which is ascribed to the divine word, is seen in its revealing to men both what they are by nature, and what they become by grace. It is, as it were, the mirror which, as legend has it, can alone slay the basilisk. That creature,

which neither fire nor sword can overcome, is destroyed at once so soon as, the mirror being set before it, it sees itself and its hideousness. The corruption of the natural man dies when it sees itself in the mirror of God's word. Not only so, that word is also like the fabled mirror, which the longer it is gazed upon, transforms and beautifies the beholder the more, till at last it reflects to all who bend lovingly over it the perfected beauty of holiness. Such an all-transforming energy pertains to God's word in the experience of all who believe.

But the apostle proceeds to state the evidence of this effectual working of the word in the Thessalonian converts. The change it had wrought in them was genuine, "for" it withstood trial. That is the test of a right acceptance of the truth. Our Lord Himself has said, that the stony-place hearer, though he has received the word with joy, only "dureth for a while ; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." It was not so with Paul's converts—his "brethren," as he lovingly calls them, his heart going out towards them in tenderness as he thinks of their trials. They were not "his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh." But they were his brethren in closer ties—they and he had one faith, and love, and hope—one Father in heaven, and one home towards which the eye of their hearts was ever turning. He specially recognises here their common brotherhood in their common suffering, just as John writes to the Seven Churches of the apocalyptic vision, "I, John, who also am your *brother* and companion in *tribulation*." The world was against Paul at Corinth, its hostility being specially stirred up against him by the Jews. That same world, instigated

by the same Jewish hatred, was against the Thessalonian believers. They were thus closely bound to him by the strong link of common tribulation. "Ye became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus." They had been already described as followers, or imitators of Paul, even of the Lord Himself (chap. i. 6) in "the much affliction" which characterized their reception of the word. They are now further portrayed in their unconscious imitation of the Christian churches of Judæa, in this same respect—the point of imitation here is not in their faith, or their activity in Christian service, though these may be implied, but in their patience and submissive endurance under persecution. "For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews." The Thessalonian Church was the earliest out of Palestine to testify their faithfulness in the furnace of affliction. Hence there is a peculiar propriety in the reference here. What the Jewish Christians had already experienced was now becoming *their* lot. Their suffering was the same—persecution. The cause of it was the same—their acceptance of the gospel. The persecutors were the same—their own countrymen. The church in Judæa had been violently opposed by the unbelieving Jews. There had been general and systematic persecution under Herod Agrippa, when James was beheaded and Peter imprisoned. The church in Thessalonica was meeting with the same violent opposition at the hands of their unbelieving fellow-citizens—Gentiles. Their Master had said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I am not come to send peace, but a sword; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." These converts were realizing the

meaning of these words in all the bitterness of their own personal experience. Those of their own nation, and city, and families were ranged against them: and in presence of such experience Christ's people were eating the bread of tears. They were being exercised in what Melancthon used to say was the best of the three schools in which a Christian must be trained—the school of suffering. Those of prayer and meditation, he said, were good, but that of trial was the most fruitful of them all. It was so in apostolic times. It was so in the times of the Reformation. It is so still. The way of cross-bearing is the way of light. Christ's people need to be taught how noble a thing it is to suffer and be strong. Yet none the less in such experiences, painful as they are—not “joyous, but grievous,” the hearts of Christ's people, fainting and afraid, need sympathy. The giving of that sympathy is the conferring oftentimes of strength. Hence Paul's words of overflowing tenderness to his readers. He would thus comfort and stablish them, so that at last, earth's trials past, they might, having endured unto the end, enter into God's own “kingdom and glory.”

The apostle now turns aside from his theme. He makes a digression. He “goes off” (Jowett) upon the word “Jews,” to describe the evil deeds and the merited doom of his own countrymen. How is this somewhat strange digression to be explained? Different explanations of this fearful indictment of the Jews, from one who himself had been a furious persecutor, have been given, and perhaps there is an amount of truth in them all. It is said, (1) that as the persecution of believers in Thessalonica, though from the heathen, was yet directly instigated by the Jews, it was natural that Paul should turn aside to speak of

them and expose their wickedness. (2) That the apostle, at the very time of his writing this Epistle, was himself suffering at the hands of his countrymen, the Jews (Acts xviii. 5, 6, 12). In Corinth, when with Silas and Timothy he preached in Christ's name, the Jews "opposed themselves and blasphemed," and even "brought him to the judgment-seat." His mind, we can therefore well conceive, was full of thoughts regarding these Jewish misdeeds, and hence he bursts forth into utterances of sorrowful indignation. (3) That the Thessalonians were converts from Polytheism to a religion which was Monotheistic, and in a sense a growth out of Judaism. They could consequently hardly fail to be stumbled by seeing Jews everywhere its most violent opponents. They would be apt to reason in this way, when their faith was weak and their despondency prevailing—these Jews, who have all along been worshippers of the one true God, and who have seen the first beginnings of Christianity in their own midst, must surely be better judges than we Gentiles can be. What if, after all, they have the right of it? Paul may have striven to meet this wavering state of mind by showing that the opposition of the Jews to the truth was in reality in strict accord with their whole previous character and conduct. The motive of this digression can easily be explained in one or other of these ways.

Let us look now at the subject-matter of the digression itself. The Jews not only, he would say, persecute you, but they are the men "who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us." The culminating point in Jewish wickedness is the casting out and murder of their Messiah, the Son of God. Our Saviour Himself, in His parable, said,

“Last of all, He sent His Son; and Him they slew.” In ignorance, it is true, they did it; for one of the voices which fell from the cross was this, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Yet that ignorance was no justification of their sin, for the apostle adds here, “and their own prophets.” Their divinely commissioned teachers during the years of the preparation, whose books the Jews still read and valued—these teachers who all alike testified of Jesus, for “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” the Jews had also slain. Such is the Old Testament indictment against the Jews. Such, very specially, is our Lord’s own charge against them (Matt. xxiii. 29–39). The reproaches He there sadly utters against them, and the doom He pronounces upon them, are evidently, both as to language and sentiment, here present to the apostle’s mind. His words are but an echo of his Master’s.

Seeing, then, that such was the past character and conduct of the Jewish people, Paul adds, as naturally following, “and have persecuted us.” The persecution or banishing—driving forth, as the word means—which they had meted out so often before to God’s servants, it was to be expected would also be extended to Paul, and Silas, and Timotheus,—to the apostles as a whole, and even to the Thessalonians, and the general body of believers. Paul would speak of *all* as exposed to such suffering at the hands of his unbelieving countrymen—they are all embraced in the “us.” Under new conditions, the old Jewish character would again assert itself. Hence he declares, “They please not God, and are contrary to all men.” With what unutterable sadness must not Paul have given expression to this verdict! Wherever his missionary labours had ex-

tended, he had met with their most malignant hostility. The more he came in contact with Gentile-life, the more he must have observed the intense dislike, too, with which the Jews were everywhere regarded. Despising other nations, they were themselves only loathed by these nations in return; and now that Paul's own feelings, since his conversion, had broadened and widened into the love of all mankind, and the seeking of all men's salvation, he could not but recognise his countrymen in their sullen rebellion against God, and supercilious isolation from their fellow-men, as showing what Tacitus calls "*adversus omnes alios hostile odium*" (*vid.* Eadie, for other passages from Gentile writers, and for good note on this whole passage). The mark of God's anger had been set upon them, and the divine judgment had been ratified by men. In them had come to be illustrated and fulfilled our Lord's own saying in His inaugural Sermon on the Mount, "If the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Rejected of God and despised of men—these two clauses represent what are often in human experience seen closely connected. There is a German adage which says, "When God loathes aught, men presently loathe it too." But here it is not so much the dislike felt by others towards the Jews' that is specified, as the animosity of the Jews towards all others. And how did this opposition manifest itself? "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved." That is, they are opposed to all men, seeing that they hinder, or try to hinder (*καλύνοντων*), the servants of Christ from proclaiming the word of salvation to the heathen. Like their own

Pharisees, they would neither enter in themselves nor allow others to enter in. Jewish exclusiveness in earlier times had had its element of good. Indeed, they were exclusive by the express command of their covenant God. But now that which had once been dutiful had become specially sinful. They were, in meeting Christ's cause with hostility and blasphemy, displeasing God and doing infinite wrong to their fellow-men. They had been acting in this way in Corinth, where Paul was writing this Epistle. Their conduct was immediately before his own view as he wrote, and he is preparing his Thessalonian friends for a similar experience, already beginning, or soon to begin, in their own midst. But in thus standing in the way of the Gentiles' salvation, they were acting so as "to fill up their own sins alway." With fearful perseverance—"alway," alike before Christ Jesus came, when He came, and after He had gone, they had been filling up the measure of their guilt. And now, as the "sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees" (1 Chron. xiv. 15) was the sign to David that God was going forth to smite the host of the Philistines, so there were premonitions, indications, many and clear, of coming disaster to the Jews. The archangel of judgment, with his sword-arm free, was already approaching—so near, indeed, that in anticipation the apostle could say, "For the wrath (the wrath so long foretold by the prophets and by Christ Himself—the wrath so justly merited) *is* come upon them to the uttermost." That wrath had already fallen upon the Jewish people when their sin reached its hideous culmination in the slaying of Him who had come unto His own. Its uttermost manifestation was already at hand. Hardly fourteen years after the date of this

Epistle, it overtook them with a sudden surprise, it descended in the doom of fire upon the once sacred city, the entire overthrow and extinction of the Jewish state, the dispersion of the race, and the centuries of weary wandering appointed them, which are not yet closed. That was the "*dies iræ*" for the Jews—a foreshadowing of "the wrath to come." They who belong to God's own kingdom and glory, on the other hand, while they see in that fearful judgment which befell the Jews a distinct and manifest type of another and a final judgment, wait for "Jesus who is delivering them from the wrath to come.'

LECTURE IX.

Μὴ μόνον σκοποῦντις τὸ κατ' ἑαυτοὺς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ κατὰ τοὺς πέλαις. Ἀγάπης γὰρ ἀληθοῦς καὶ βεβαίαις ἔσπιν, μὴ μόνον ἑαυτὸν εἶλιν σώζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς.—MARTYRIUM S. POLY-CARPI, I.

“But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short season, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more exceedingly to see your face with great desire: because we would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For ye are our glory and our joy.”—1 THESS. ii. 17-20.

THE apostle now returns from his digression on the character and conduct of the unbelieving Jews in regard to the gospel and its adherents, and the doom about to descend upon them. The third chapter, therefore, would better take its beginning from ver. 17, which resumes the previous course of thought. In ver. 14, Paul tenderly alludes to the trials which had befallen his Thessalonian friends on account of their acceptance of the truth. He now describes the anxiety—the anxious eagerness—with which he and his companions had sought to revisit them and to comfort them in their affliction, and the reason why they had not succeeded. They had been hindered from going to Thessalonica. The converts in that city were in trouble. To whom of all earthly friends could they look but to the apostle! He was their counsellor and their stay. He had been, in his affectionate yearning over them, as

a very nursing mother (ver. 7). He had been, in the faithfulness of his instruction imparted to them, as their very father (ver. 11). He knew, from the intensity of his own longing, how desirous they on their part must have been of his presence, to comfort them concerning the faith. Hence he explains his absence. He tells them, not indeed in the tone of apology or self-exculpation, but in the language of simple natural solicitude, that his absence was in no way of his own choosing. It was against his express desire and intention. "But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire." "Taken from you," literally, orphaned from you: the separation is represented by the word as being a constrained one. His removal from them, and the consequent loss of their company, made him feel bereaved. A sense of loneliness and desolation rested upon his heart as he thought of his absence from them. He was "comfortless" (John xiv. 18) as an orphan. All this lies imbedded in the word rendered "taken from you." Yet the figure suggested, of the orphan, is not by itself to be unduly pressed, for in the same clause he calls his converts "brethren;" the leading idea is simply bereavement. Yet, painful as was this separation, it was only after all for a brief moment—for the season of an hour—a short time indeed in itself, and shorter still in the apostle's conception of it, so vivid was his remembrance of his sojourn in their midst. Indeed, his separation from them was in another aspect of it not a separation at all. It was "in presence (rather, in face), not in heart." It is the same word which is rendered "face" in the next clause. His heart had never ceased to be with them, though they no

longer could see its yearning tenderness in the traits of his well-remembered countenance. Torn from them, as he was, he yet retracts, as it were, what he had said about his severance from them. It was not real. He had in a sense their society still, for as Goethe puts it—

“Gar freundliche Gesellschaft leistet uns
Ein ferner Freund, wenn wir ihn glücklich wissen.”

But though he was thus already and at all times one with them in union of sympathy and love and prayer, he “endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.” Why “the more abundantly”? The clause has been filled up in many ways, *e.g.* more abundantly than usual (Olshausen), or because the absence was not in heart (Luther), or because the absence was so short,—the pain of parting being so recent and still so fresh,—that the desire to return was all the stronger (Lünemann, Alford), or because the absence was constrained and not voluntary (Webster and Wilkinson). Perhaps it is better to seek the explanation of the words, “the more abundantly,” in his having learned so much about their persecution. The more he heard about their trials, the more he yearned to see them—their face—once more (*je mehr er von ihren Verfolgungen erfahren müsste*, Bunsen’s *Bibelwerk*). Paul knew that his counsels were specially needed by his Thessalonian friends, and that his personal presence would be a comfort to them in the midst of their anxieties and sufferings. He showed the sincerity of his friendship in this way, that it clung the more tenaciously to its object, the more that object was beset with trial. He was, in a word, a tried friend in need.

“Wherefore,” ver. 18, he goes on to say, on account of this our vehement longing to revisit you, “we would have come unto you,”—we would fain have done so, and indeed intended to do it,—“even I, Paul, once and again.” He, at least for himself, on two separate occasions had almost succeeded in carrying out his desire into action. It was no feeling of desire suddenly rising up within his bosom, and having only a passing seat there. He had, he assures them, twice expressly made the attempt to visit them, “but Satan hindered us.” He was hindered: the word is a metaphor taken from military operations—the breaking up of roads, the destroying of bridges, and the interposing of varied obstacles, to cut off the enemy’s approach or retreat. Or the metaphor may be that of the race-course, the upsetting of a chariot by being brought into violent contact with another. Either way we have a graphic description of hindrance—obstacles in the way of the apostle’s advance. And these are directly ascribed by Paul himself to the agency of Satan. Just as an angel stood in the evil way of Balaam the apostate prophet to intercept him (*διαβάλλειν αὐτόν*), so Satan is here represented as standing in the good way of Paul, the servant of the Most High God. It is worthy of notice that the personal spirit of evil is here mentioned by the Hebrew name, Satan, in this earliest Epistle of Paul’s—an Epistle, too, addressed to a Gentile church—all the more noteworthy when we remember that these two Epistles to the Thessalonians contain no instance of direct quotation from Old Testament Scripture. How then, it has been asked, had these Gentile believers come to know the name and nature of the evil spirit? Bishop Wordsworth answers, and with considerable plausibility, “By St.

Paul's oral teaching, and probably also by a *written* Gospel. And of all the Gospels there is none which speaks so clearly concerning the personality and operations of the tempter, under the name of *Satan*, as the Gospel written for the special use of the Greeks by St. Paul's fellow-traveller, *St. Luke*." Here we have therefore another incidental confirmation of the view that that Gospel may have been entrusted to the church of Thessalonica to disseminate. Such an allusion to the adversary of souls as this, and there are many such in New Testament Scripture, points us very directly to the doctrine of his personality. If we would take language in its simple and natural significance, we can come to no other conclusion than this, that there are "ascribed to him permissive powers and agencies of a frightful extent and multiplicity" (Ellicott). But can we specify with aught of probability the form of Satanic hindrance to which the apostle alludes? In what did the restraint in the present case consist? We may surmise, but nothing more. It was not, however, we may be sure, any pressing load of apostolic labour. This Paul would have described not as sent of Satan, but rather as a burden of honour laid upon him by his Master. It may possibly have been the imminent danger to which he knew he would be exposed as he had been previously, if he repaired to Thessalonica. But it is difficult to conceive that any such obstacle as this could have bulked so very largely in his view, at the very time that he is so sympathetically alive to the selfsame danger besetting his much loved friends. Besides, such an obstacle could hardly be spoken of, as it is here, as abruptly and absolutely cutting off the possibility of his visit. It is more likely that the restraint arose

from trials befalling believers in the districts where Paul himself was. However desirous to go, he could not leave those who were his present and immediate care. But this view, too, is open to some extent to the objections already stated, and it receives not the slightest support from any hint supplied by the context. We are therefore thrown back upon another supposition, which upon the whole seems best to satisfy the requirements of the case, that this hindrance of Satan was Paul's thorn, or stake, in the flesh. The "even I, Paul," indicates that the restraint was one with which he himself pre-eminently was concerned. He makes something like a severance of himself from his companion in regard to it, and the "once and again" seems to point not to a habitual or prolonged state of hindrance, such as could arise from dangers besetting the church, but rather to some sudden, unexpected and overpowering obstacle such as bodily sickness, which had come upon him personally, and after passing away, had come once more. The common view is that Paul's thorn in the flesh, "the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him," was "chronic neuralgia of the head and face, or inflammation of the eye, perhaps, in some measure, the after consequences of the blindness at Damascus." There are many incidental indications that the brows and eyes were the seat of the apostle's suffering (*vid.* Dr. Plumptre for a good summation of the question in the *New Testament Commentary for English Readers*, 2 Cor. xii. 7). It seems probable that this affliction, of more than common severity, discipline though it were, working towards his good, was the interposing obstacle referred to in the text. Like the mysterious agony which now and again seized upon King Alfred in the midst of

intensest activity, this thorn in the flesh was an interruption for the time being to all apostolic plans. Dean Stanley has well instituted this historical parallel. It may be developed still further, though it does not specially pertain to the elucidation of our immediate theme. The character of Alfred, the English hero and saint, bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the apostle. In vivid, versatile energy,—thorough self-mastery, power of inspiring trust and love, craving for sympathy, and sensitiveness to wrong,—in such traits of character they stand very near each other, and far from all others. Green (*History of English People*, i. p. 75) thus portrays the early English king: “He combined, as no other man has ever combined, English practical energy, its patient and enduring force, its profound sense of duty, the reserve and self-control that steadies in it a wide outlook and a restless daring, its temperance and fairness, its frank geniality, its sensitiveness to affection, its poetic tenderness, its deep and passionate religion.” That could well stand as a picture of Paul. It is interesting to notice that two men so alike in temperament, and also we may say with reverence, in their sphere of work, should both have suffered from some severe and mysterious bodily ailment, which was to them at once a messenger of Satan and a gift of God, hindering their self-sacrificing outward service on the one hand, but ministering to the right development of their inner life on the other.

In the case of Paul, this hindrance, sent of Satan, as it is declared to be, was yet blessed of God to Paul himself, doubtless for the increase of his patience, for the purifying of his desires, for the quickening of his zeal, for his growth in grace. It was also blessed of

God to others. To the apostle's enforced absence from his brethren in Thessalonica we owe this Epistle, fraught with its words of warning, and comforting, and direction for all time.

But passing from this, we have, in ver. 19, the statement of the ultimate reason of Paul's desire to see his converts, "for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"—a very beautiful verse, representing the close relation both for time and for eternity existing between all faithful pastors and the people of their charge. The Thessalonian Christians were peculiarly the apostle's hope, being regarded by him not simply as a conspicuous part of the reward in glory which was in store for him (Hofmann), but also his hope in connection with his present earthly work. Their conversion—their stedfastness in the faith—was largely that on which he built his hopes, under God, of the further progress of the gospel in Europe. He hoped that yet increasingly from them would "sound out the word of the Lord." They were, further, his joy, inasmuch as in their conversion and consistent Christian conduct he saw the evidence that his own labour had not been in vain in the Lord. They were a credit to him in the sight of God and men. Hence amid all his sorrows he felt that in *them* he could find his joy. They were even more to him. They were his crown of holy boasting, for they would prove at last his wreath (not *διάδημα*, but *στέφανος*) of victory,—his chaplet of ceaseless rejoicing. In a sense his converts were this to him already. They were his gleaming aureola, invisible to the children of this world, but recognised by God's saints, "by principalities and powers in heavenly places." Indeed, unless this were true of them even on earth, it could

not be said of them hereafter in heaven. Hence the apostle, his language catching the glow of his thought, exclaims, "are not even ye," is it not also you—you and others too, as, for instance, the sister Macedonian Church of Philippi, which the apostle characterizes in exactly similar terms (Phil. iv. 1)—"in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"

Then, all persecution for ever past away, Satan's assaults ended—the struggle having passed into triumph, in the King's presence will the victor be crowned. Then will there be the public manifestation of his converts as the apostle's reward, when "the just and gentle Monarch" shall come to judgment.

It is utterly tasteless to refer such a passage as this to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, as if that were in any real sense "the crowning day of Christian hopes and aspirations, when they would 'inherit the kingdom,' and 'enter into the joy of their Lord'" (*vid. The Parousia*, p. 163).

Lingering over the thought, so full of consolation and spiritual strength, to himself and his readers, the apostle repeats the expression of it. He dwells on it with a holy, joyful contemplation, ver. 20, "for ye *are* our glory and joy"—the words come from his heart with a fulness of tender affection and enthusiastic hope. His converts, "dearly beloved and longed for," are "his glory." That one word gathers up all the rays of light which stream from the others into its focus. They are his halo of glory now and evermore. Believers are described in 2 Cor. viii. 23, or at least those who are specially engaged in His service, as "the glory of Christ." They are also in a lower sense the glory of

Christ's ministers. Heubner has a remark here which is full of solemn warning and encouragement, "The pastor will find in his congregation either his honour or his shame." It was the boast of the Jews (*vid.* Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, art. "Crown") that to them had been given three crowns—the crown of the law, the crown of the priesthood, and the royal crown. These they highly prized, but they often added, better than these is the crown of a good name. Paul's crown of a good name in the presence of Christ Jesus was his converts—those who by his instrumentality had been brought to the knowledge of the truth. The same crown is offered to us all, and is in keeping for us all, if we be but faithful. History tells us that when in Philip II.'s reign a rebel claimed and gained the crown of Granada, he bore at the ceremony of coronation in his right hand a banner bearing the inscription, "More I could not desire, less would not have contented me." These words cease to be presumptuous, and become the utterance of truest wisdom, only when they are the Christian's, and refer to the crown of heavenly rejoicing, and when they are the legend of the banner under which he fights in "the sacramental host of God's elect." In view of this truth—that converts are the crown of boasting in store for all faithful witnesses for Christ Jesus—the words are invested with a solemn significance, "*we* live if *ye* stand fast in the Lord." "Now, little children, abide (*ye*) in Him, that when He shall appear *we* may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Another lesson is suggested in the gradation implied in the three words, hope, joy, crown. Andrew Fuller (vol. iv. p. 535) well says, "There are some who are our hope, who are not our joy; and others who are our

hope and joy too, for a time, who will never be our crown ; who hold not out *to the end*, and therefore will never be our rejoicing in the presence of the Lord at His coming. Some are under serious impressions, and excite a hope and joy, like that felt at the sight of blossoms in the spring, which yet are afterwards blighted. There are some that have even made a public profession, and yet, like the thorny and stony-ground hearers, produce no fruit. The object desired, therefore, is not only your setting out, but your holding on, walking in the truth, and holding fast your profession to the end. Then, indeed, you will not only be our hope and joy, but our crown of rejoicing."

LECTURE X.

*"Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land, and homeless on the water,
Pass I in patience till the work be done."*

FRED. W. MYERS, *Saint Paul*.

*"Στῆθε ἰδρωτὶς ὡς ἄκμων τυπτόμενος. Μεγάλου ἐστὶν
ἀβλῆν τοῦ τοῦ δὲ ὀρίσθαι καὶ νικᾶν."—IGNATI Ep. ad
Polycarpum, i.*

"Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone: and sent Timothy our brother, and God's minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith; that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed. For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labour should be in vain."—1 THESS. iii. 1-5.

THE apostle has just been declaring that his own interest—his own happiness, both present and future—was inseparably bound up with the spiritual prosperity of his Thessalonian converts. "Wherefore," he goes on to say, because of this, our strong and abiding interest in you, and also because of the obstacles standing in the way of visiting you, "when we could no longer forbear,"—when we could no longer "stave off the pressure of anxiety" (Webster and Wilkinson) caused by absence from you, and the all-consuming longing to hear about you, "we thought it good,"—decided "to be left at Athens alone, and sent Timotheus." His love for his friends could not rest till it received tidings of them, and towards this

end he had been willing in the true spirit of self-sacrifice to be left alone. The apostle exhibits everywhere in his life and Epistles, as a very pronounced feature of his character, a natural craving for personal sympathy. His was a nature which, with all its boldness and tenacity of purpose, needed to lean upon others, even though these others were greatly weaker than himself. The unconquerable faith of his heart craved for the interchange of human affection. Doubtless this craving appeared with redoubled force at times when depression of spirits, another marked characteristic of his nature, prevailed. Such was probably the state he is now describing, if the hindrance of Satan, before alluded to, be indeed the severe bodily malady—the thorn in the flesh to which he was subject. Yet, notwithstanding all this,—conscious as he was of “the aching hollows of the heart,”—he had been willing to be deprived of the society of his dearest friend. He had been willing that the Thessalonians should gain by his loss. For their sakes, therefore, he had decided for a time to be “*alone*.” An emphasis rests upon the word. It seems to be the utterance of the wail of bereavement. Nor is this all. He was alone “at Athens.” We sometimes speak of the solitude of great cities. To sensitive minds that solitude—the living, unknown and uncared for, amid the bustle and throng of a many-voiced city—becomes painfully oppressive. Paul felt this. But to him there were additional elements of pain. Athens! How different from Jerusalem, the city of God! Wherever the solitary apostle turned his eyes, they rested upon manifestations of polytheism and its accompanying social pollution. The city was “wholly given to idolatry.” It was crowded with idols. As he moved

in such a scene, he alone was a witness for God and Christ. It could be no slight trial to be alone in such a place and in such surroundings. "Signum ergo rari amoris est et anxii desiderii quod se omni solatio privare non recusat, ut subveniat Thessaloniensibus" (Calvin). To send Timothy away was to exhibit a self-abnegation which is the outcome and the evidence of a living faith.

But, further, Paul would show that it was no inferior, no ordinary messenger, whom he had sent. In accordance with his common practice, he attaches to the name of Timothy epithets of honour—"our brother,"—one, therefore, who in the fullest sense possessed the apostle's esteem and confidence—our brother, one of the household of faith, one of that blessed company of brethren, because they are "faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit" (1 Tim. vi. 2). Timothy was peculiarly Paul's brother, both in labour and in suffering. But there is a yet more noble title conferred upon him. Paul adds, "a fellow-labourer with God." This is, at least, a not improbable reading. The word does not mean a worker along with others in the service of God (*vid.* Meyer on 1 Cor. iii. 9), but, literally, a worker along with God; not, indeed, implying that human agency stands, as it were, alongside of divine, but that God who works through His servants lovingly gives them the dignity of being called sharers in His work. The last verse of Mark's Gospel is an exposition of the words, "They went forth and preached everywhere, the *Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following." That verse portrays the whole course of the Church's progress on earth. The mission entrusted to His people by God is to fight His battle against

sin and Satan. He desires, and because He has so decreed it, He needs, human instrumentality. He claims the loving, willing service of His "peculiar people." He abundantly rewards it too. The more His servants do good, the more good they get. In working for Him, He works the more for them. The first Napoleon used to say, "My power would fall were I not to support it by new achievements." This holds pre-eminently true of the Christian soldier's power. "In the gospel of Christ," in this sphere of holiest service, in this holy war, the more we achieve the greater becomes our power. The Captain of our salvation has so willed it. He who is "a fellow-labourer with God in the gospel of Christ" holds an office in which speaking finds its noblest theme, its purest inspiration, its most important design,—in which the influence exerted bears powerfully for good, not only on the individual and social life of man, but also and directly on the eternal interests of the human race. In this work, which blends ceaselessly with the infinite, we are all, if we are Christ's, fellow-labourers with God.

But why are these two titles specially given to Timothy in the present case? Some suppose that objections were taken to his youth, *e.g.* in 1 Tim. iv. 12 he is expressly exhorted thus, "Let no man despise thy youth," and that the apostle considerably meets and sets aside such a possible objection on the part of the Thessalonians by these words of commendation. But this supposition has no support in the context. Nor does the explanation lie in the fact that Timothy was a subordinate of the apostle, and likely to be, on that account, lightly esteemed in Thessalonica. A better explanation lies in what is

more than a conjecture, that Timothy's character had in it much of feminine tenderness and timidity (*vid.* Howson's *Lectures on St. Paul*, p. 42, and Alford and Stanley on 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11). His early training in the retirement of home influences, and "his often infirmities," which may have made that training necessary, possibly developed such a type of character. This shrinking self-consciousness may have needed, or at least been the better of, Paul's words of hearty commendation. But, after all, the right explanation seems to lie quite at hand (*vid.* Hofmann). It is this. The Christians in Thessalonica were just as anxious to see Paul himself as he was to see them. Paul knew it would necessarily be something of disappointment to them to receive only a messenger, however well commissioned. Hence, as he had just before shown that the parting with Timothy had cost his own heart a pang, so Timothy himself, so dear to him, was entitled to all honour from them.

But what about the purpose of Timothy's mission? It was "to establish"—to make them steadfast in the midst of persecution—to make them "rooted and grounded in love"—to make their very trials serve this all-important end, that they, as a Church, might "cast forth roots as Lebanon." This work of establishing them is, strictly speaking, God's work. "To Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ" (Rom. xvi. 25). But it is here none the less ascribed to Timothy—spoken of as *his* work, because he is called "a fellow-labourer with God." His ministry was to be the means of "imparting to them some spiritual gift, to the end they may be established." But the apostle adds, "and to comfort you concerning your faith," or

rather to encourage you in behalf of, in the interest of, your faith,—faith here meaning not trust or fidelity, but belief objectively considered—the faith once delivered to the saints. This, too, is God's work. He is the “God of all consolation,” and Christ Jesus the Saviour is “the consolation of Israel.” But it is also His servant's work, as they exhort in His name. These two clauses, representing the purpose of Timothy's mission, are closely, indissolubly related. The one is explanatory of the other. True firmness—steadfastness of Christian character—is the outcome of heart-possession of the faith. The apostle in the following clause states what the theme, the subject-matter of Timothy's exhortation, was to be, ver. 3: “That no man should be moved by these afflictions.” There is considerable difficulty in apprehending the precise meaning of the word rendered “moved.” Many, perhaps most commentators, understand it in the sense of being disturbed—shaken—made to apostatize because of trials besetting the profession of Christianity. It is, however, upon the whole better to understand the word as moved in the sense of being flattered, soothed, and pleasantly cajoled—befooled into denying their Lord—possibly by the suggestions of their heathen neighbours, that in embracing Christianity they had simply been deceived by Jewish adventurers (so Hofmann, compare chap. ii. 1–12). In the midst of their tribulations Paul feared lest they might be thus tempted—that such insinuations might prove too welcome to the weakness of their faith. Wordsworth well says here: “An example of the need of such a warning was seen in the case of Demas, who was allured by the love of this world, and forsook Paul in his sufferings at Rome, and departed to

Thessalonica (2 Tim. iv. 10). The devil is often more to be feared when he fawns than when he roars. The man of God from Judah overcame Satan at Bethel, but he was ensnared by him under the oak tree (1 Kings xiii. 14). David vanquished Satan in the battle-field (1 Sam. xvii. 49), but was vanquished by him in the cool of the evening on the house-top (2 Sam. xi. 2)."¹

The reason for their steadfast endurance is given in the words which follow, "For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." This knowledge they had both from apostolic teaching and from their own personal experience—the knowledge that tribulation is the common lot of Christ's people. "Unto them it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." The words of their Lord are, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;" and Paul has declared, as the statement of a general principle, "Yea, and all that will live godly shall suffer persecution." The world's scorn and enmity cannot fail to be excited by the Christian's character and conduct. The pilgrims towards the celestial city differ in raiment and speech and habits from the dwellers in Vanity Fair. Hence, holiness entails suffering as well as sin does, for sin will in some way or other persecute it. In the nature of things, therefore, believers acknowledge that, while "God has not appointed them to wrath," He has appointed them to affliction. But the word "appointed" has an element of meaning in it which

¹ Compare with this, "Die tückische Macht, die lauert, uns zu verderben, singt ihr auserkorenes Opfer gern mit süßen Liedern und goldenen Märchen in den Schlaf. Dagegen pocht der rettende Himmelsbote oftmals scharf und erschreckend an unsern Thür."—*Undine*, p. 135.

we ought not to overlook. It implies not so much the idea of something fixed and settled, as the idea of our willing submission—our *lying* prostrate before our heavenly Father's will. That must ever be the attitude of the renewed heart. Tribulation comes thus to be regarded as "the marks of the Lord Jesus," the *stigmata* which represent His ownership over them, and their consecration to His service. Their hearty, loyal submission, so hard, so impossible as it may appear to be, becomes easy when the uses of tribulation are understood and felt. God *appoints* His people to it for their own spiritual profit. The very word "tribulation" has been called (*vid.* Trench, *Study of Words*, p. 33) "a concentrated poem." It meant in its first Christian use the separation of the chaff from the wheat in a man's character—the separating in him of what is useless from what is precious, as the threshing-roller separates the husks from the grain. Hence afflictions are beautifully called by George Wither, "the bruising-flails of God's corrections." Bishop Jewel has the following comment upon this verse: "Frankincense, when it is put in the fire, giveth the greater perfume; spice, if it be pounded, smelleth the sweeter; the earth, when it is torn up with the plough, becometh more fruitful; the seed in the ground, after frost and snow, and winter storms, springeth the ranker; the nigher the vine is pruned to the stock, the greater grape it yieldeth; the grape, when it is most pressed and beaten, maketh the sweetest wine; fine gold is the better when it is cast in the fire; rough stones, with hewing, are squared and made fit for building. These are familiar examples to show the benefit and commodity which the children of God receive by persecution." Realizing

such profit from tribulation, God's people can even rejoice that "they are appointed thereto."

The apostle in ver. 4, proceeds to appeal to what he had himself taught the Thessalonians, and to the confirmation of it by their own experience, "for verily, when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer persecution; even as it came to pass, and ye know." There is the addition in this verse of an allusion to the apostle's own sufferings as well as to theirs. Having the same Lord—rejoicing in "the common salvation," he and they were in closest sympathy with one another. He could say to them, as did John to the seven churches of the apocalyptic vision, "I who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

But the apostle, while he trusted that good would result from the trials which his converts were undergoing, had also his fears, his misgivings in regard to them; what if some of his friends should turn out, under the winnowing of persecution, only false professors after all! Hence he says, ver. 5, "For this cause," because of this, his anxiety about them, "when I could no longer forbear." He had used the very same words before (ver. 1), but he repeats them now with a more special and direct application to himself, "I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain." Timothy's mission, therefore, was a double one. On the one hand, he had been sent to stablish—to confirm and encourage the Thessalonians, and, on the other hand, to learn how matters stood with them, and to satisfy Paul by sending him intelligence about them. The apostle knew that the tempter had tempted them, but he did not know, and

could not be at rest till he knew, whether the allurements of the prince of this world had led to their apostasy or not. If the issue turned out to be disastrous, then had his own labour in their midst proved vain. Notwithstanding all the comfort Paul had in them—though he could speak of them as his “hope and joy and crown of rejoicing,” he yet contemplates the possibility of their falling away, and the consequent failure of his own labour for their benefit. There is a lesson for us in this. No man on earth knows absolutely whether his labours in the case of any individual soul will be ultimately successful or in vain. He looks forward to the great day alone for the final declaration. The allusion to the tempter here, further, is full of instruction. In chap. ii. 18, Satan is spoken of as hindering Paul’s projects—blocking up his way. Outward obstacles he may interpose between a servant of God and his purposes. He may absolutely hinder a course which we propose to pursue. But he cannot absolutely make us to sin. He can be no more than a tempter, and the very idea of temptation implies the power in the tempted of resistance. Chrysostom has said, the devil did not cast Christ down from the pinnacle of the temple; he only made the suggestion, “Cast Thyself down.” So, too, is it with his assaults upon the Christian. Whosoever falls, casts himself down. He cannot be compelled. So St. Bernard, “It is the devil’s part to suggest: ours not to consent. As oft as we resist him, so often we overcome him; as often as we overcome him, so often we bring joy to the angels, and glory to God; who opposeth us, that we may contend; and assisteth us, that we may conquer.”

We are entitled to go even farther than this, and

say that in every case of resistance of the tempter, there is new accession of spiritual strength to the believer himself. In fighting the good fight of faith—in overcoming the wicked one, we gain new power. As the South Sea Islanders imagine that the prowess and valour of the enemies they slay in battle pass over into themselves, so in truth is it with the soldier of the cross. The very force and strength of the temptations which he overthrows become his own. “The strength which lay in the temptation has shifted his seat, and passed over into the man who has overcome the temptation” (*vid.* Trench’s *Studies in the Gospels* for this and some interesting patristic and mediæval illustrations, *The Temptation*). Hence, “in all these things, *i.e.* all these trials, we are more than conquerors (*ὑπερνικῶμεν*, Rom viii. 37) through Him that loved us.” The victory, so far from being accompanied with loss, is found to have been won with positive gain. The conqueror is strengthened by every such victory for further and final triumph.

Therefore the exhortation of Ignatius in his Epistle to Polycarp has a meaning for all time, “Stand firm as the anvil under its repeated blows; for a great combatant must not only be buffeted, but must also prevail.”

There is, however, one caution especially which every much-tried Christian needs. There is the danger of regarding trials in the light of “*stipendia fidei*,” as an old writer calls them,—imposts or dues, that is to say, which believers owe to God, because He has made them better than others. Such a spirit of self-complacency will not indeed lessen trials, but it will empty them of all blessing in regard both to the life that now is and to that which is to come. It will make them, indeed, burdens too heavy to be borne.

LECTURE XI.

“To St. Paul specially was it given to preach to the world, who knew the world; he subdued the heart, who understood the heart. It was his sympathy that was his means of influence; it was his affectionateness which was his title and instrument of empire.”—NEWMAN.

“But when Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also to see you; for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith; for now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith.”—1 THESS. iii. 6-10.

THE apostle now tells us, that on Timothy's return from his mission, bearing good tidings of the Thessalonian Church, he had been comforted. The new-born joy, the tender love of his heart, lies like a gleam of light upon the very words he employs. (Statim sub Timothei adventum, recenti gaudio, tenerrimo amore hæc scribit, Bengel.) “But when Timotheus just now (ἄρτι) came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings,”—tidings which were a gospel, and message of peace and gladness to our fainting hearts. These good tidings were, first of all, about their faith,—the root-grace of the Christian life,—the foundation upon which all the graces of the renewed nature are to be built (2 Pet. i. 5, 6). The apostle gives chief prominence to this—the attitude

of their hearts towards God in Christ Jesus. He was comforted to learn that amid all the darkness of their tribulation, their faith, like the night-blooming ceres-flower, lived and spread abroad its fragrance. But the good tidings brought by Timothy referred further to their charity, their love,—that grace which is the evidence of faith, and by which faith works. These are never separate in the divine life. Ignatius of Antioch, in writing to the Ephesian Church, well says: “Your faith is the guide, but your love is the way which leads to God” (“*ἡ δὲ πίστις ὑμῶν ἀναγώγων ὑμῶν, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη ὁδὸς ἡ ἀναφέρουσα εἰς Θεόν*”). Or, again, it is well said—

“Such perfect friends are faith and love,
That neither lives where both are not.”

This charity or love represents, at least chiefly, the attitude of their hearts, “one toward another, and toward all men” (ver. 12). The apostle rejoices that his Thessalonian friends abounded in this love. But the good tidings which cheered his heart were also about the attitude of his friends to himself, their teacher. This he puts last, as, however precious in his own personal estimation, it is of slight importance compared with their abiding stedfast in faith and love. “And that ye have good remembrance of us always,”—a remembrance which was good, inasmuch as it was in no way formal, but genuine and strong. It was also a constant remembrance. It had a ceaseless abode in their breasts. Time, and absence, and sorrow could not lessen it. It was, further, a specially affectionate remembrance. It sprung from warm and fervid love. He describes it as “desiring greatly to see us.” It went out in longing after a renewal of

their fellowship. Their remembrance of the apostle, taking this form, was thus of itself a sufficient evidence of their faithful attachment to the truth. Had they been backsliding—had they in their declining spiritual life been laying themselves open to the reproof, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love,” they would not have desired so intensely to see the apostle’s face; they would rather have shunned his presence. They would have been ashamed and afraid of his coming. Once more, this remembrance was a mutual one. Paul adds, “as we also to see you.” The desire of meeting was not on one side only; it was on both. Love was the bond uniting them; and it is in love alone that there exists a true communion of hearts. Hence the apostle proceeds to declare, “Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you, in all our affliction and distress, by your faith.” He comes back again to the contemplation of his converts’ faith; for in reality in their faith are included all the elements of soul-prosperity and health. He finds comfort for himself in the tidings of the faith of others. This comfort he specially needed. He was in crushing difficulties, and in pressure of affliction. The same words are found together, and also along with others in 2 Cor. vi. 4; and while they are perhaps here not to be clearly distinguished, they represent, the one, constraint of outward circumstances, possibly sickness, or pecuniary embarrassment, or hard and wasting manual toil; the other, mental and spiritual affliction, arising, it may be, therefrom. Whether there may lie in the words an allusion to a new attack of his bodily malady, or to special despondency of spirit, or to some outburst of persecution to which he was exposed in Corinth, cannot very accu-

rately be ascertained. All that is expressly said is, that the apostle felt himself revived and encouraged in his own adversity by hearing of his friend's inward prosperity. He could say, as did John to Gaius (3 John 4), "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Ver. 8, "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." The apostle's distress, while he was in Corinth, is represented by him as a species of death, as he says elsewhere, "I die daily." But from this death he, as it were, revived. He felt himself raised again to the full activity and enthusiasm of life, by learning of their faithful adherence to Christ Jesus. When the patriarch Jacob had the good news brought to him that his son Joseph was alive, and governor of Egypt, "the spirit of Jacob revived." His years of mourning had been a kind of living death to him, and the tidings had delivered him from it. In the same way was Paul quickened in the midst of all his sorrows. The news which he so welcomed had been to him as life from the dead. As Newman has said of him: "He felt all his neighbours to be existing in himself." So we may further say, he on his part felt that he existed in them—his life was bound up with theirs. This oneness—this identity of interest and aim—can only rightly manifest itself in those who are one in Christ Jesus. Human character in all its nobler elements can be developed alone in sympathy with others, in the willingness to share in each other's joys, and sorrows, and triumphs, and failures. Isolation of spirit is spiritual death. It is with hearts as with the embers of the hearth. "Do we not see glimmering half-red embers, if laid *together*, get into the brightest white glow!" (Carlyle's *French Revolution*, i. p. 251). What a striking contrast have

we to the apostle of Christ, in such an one as Goethe, the apostle of mere worldly culture, the picture of a man living in "the miserable dream of keeping the course of his inward development free from all foreign interference," reluctant to devote himself and his inner life to anything, or to any one outside of himself, consumed with the desire—as he expressed it to Lavater—"to raise the pyramid of my existence, the base of which is already laid, as high as possible in the air; that absorbing every other desire, and scarcely ever quitting me"! (*vid.* Hutton's *Essays*, ii. p. 31). There is no more saddening, even revolting picture to the Christian man than that. We can never rise from self to God, so long as we try to do so in the way of selfish isolation. We can in reality only find ourselves when we first lose ourselves in others. It is thus that Christianity manifests itself, and evermore extends its influence—

"Till each man finds his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood."

But this verse specially alludes to the steadfastness of a Christian Church. What is implied in it? (1) That individually and collectively the members of it are "in the Lord"—abiding in Him both in faith and in practice. (2) That while "in the Lord," they are exposed to the danger of wavering. The language seems military. It suggests the idea of conflict. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13). Christ's Church, each section of it, is exposed to assault. The army of the living God is subject to having its ranks broken in upon. This is the aim of the tempter, of whose wiles the apostle had just been speaking. Hence the

exhortation to stedfast adherence to God and His truth, for “by faith ye stand;” stedfast adherence, too, to one another, that so they may present the strength of a united phalanx to the enemy, and at last rejoice in the day of triumph.

We learn in ver. 9 how this reinvigoration of the apostle’s spirit showed itself. “All the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God.” It was a joy which arose from the contemplation of the state of others. In the highest sense, therefore, it was disinterested. It was a joy, further, which arose from the contemplation of the *spiritual* state of others. These, his Thessalonian friends, could not have sent to him through Timothy an account of their worldly prosperity—their happiness as to outward surroundings. There was doubtless little or nothing of this kind which could be a comfort and a joy to him. But it was when he learned about their *faith* that his heart was full of joy—a joy, too, not of personal complacency, as he thought of himself as the agent in their conversion, but “before our God,” “in the sight of God, even our Father” (chap. i. 3)—a joy seen not by the children of the world, but by God “who seeth in secret”—a joy which was able to bear the scrutiny of the all-searching eye. It was a pure joy, free from aught of earthly alloy. It was a joy which is in reality one with “the joy in heaven in the presence of the angels of God” over repenting sinners. This joy in a Christian’s heart is a God-given joy. It comes from Him. Hence He is ever to receive thanks for it. The apostle exclaims, “For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy.” Being a joy “before God,” and coming from Him, it is of the very nature of the ease that Paul should

thank God for it. We are to give Him thankfulness in return (*ἀνταποδοῦναι*). This is the debt which we owe to Him, and which we can never fully discharge. We are always to pay it, and yet feel that it never can be paid. "What thanks" can ever be regarded as commensurate with the greatness of the divine goodness! Lost in adoring wonder, we can only say—

"Through all eternity to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
For oh! eternity's too short
To utter all Thy praise."

But the apostle's sympathetic joy and devout thanksgiving, because of the Thessalonians' faith and love, and affectionate regard for himself, do not in any way blind him to whatever defects they had. He does not flatter them, because he loves them. He does not cherish towards them that spirit of false friendship which, by keeping silence, hands over him whom it loves to the devil (*quæ illum quem diligit, tacendo tradit diabolo*). He is careful that they do not fall into the fatal error of thinking themselves well-nigh perfect, because he can commend them so heartily. Hence, while he thanks God for their reception of the truth (chap. ii. 13), for the manifestation of it in their character and conduct (chap. i. 2, 3), and last of all for their stedfast adherence to it amid persecution, he proceeds now to allude to what still needed in them to be strengthened, increased, and perfected. Ver. 10, "Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." His prayer, as well as his thanksgiving on their behalf, he speaks of as incessant. It was his aspiration by day; it was

the breathing of his heart in the stillness of the night season—mingling, we might almost suppose, with his very dreams. His prayer, further, was intensely earnest, above all ordinary measure. It was a wrestling with his covenant-God, that he might be permitted again to see the face of his converts. Satan had hindered this, his desire and purpose, once and again. Hence, in view of such hindrance his recourse was to the weapon of all-prayer, and he prevailed at last. His prayer *was* heard. He was once more ultimately permitted to look upon the faces of those who were “his brethren, dearly beloved and longed for.” He desired this boon, not for the gratification of any mere feeling of friendship either in himself or in them. However desirable in this respect it might be, his meeting with them for which he supplicated God, aimed, above all, at doing them good. There were what he calls “the lacking measures of your faith.” He had much still to teach them,—even although he had spoken of them as “examples to all that believe” (chap. i. 7),—both as to doctrine and as to duty. (1) As to doctrine, their knowledge was defective. There was much as to the subject-matter of their faith which had to be more largely explained. They were entertaining not only imperfect, but erroneous views, for instance, about the coming of the Lord, about the state of those of their brethren who had fallen asleep in death, and the share these would have in the glories and joys of the approaching advent. In matters of this kind the churches, generally, of the apostolic age, had less defined views than those to whom have come “the long results of time.” (2) As to practice there was much in the Church of Thessalonica which called for correction. The apostolic churches, like the mission

churches of our own day, were in the midst of a social corruption, of which we can barely form even a conception (*vid. passim*, Jowett's *Essay on Evils in the Church of the Apostolical Age*). There were especially four classes of evils prevailing. (*a*) Licentiousness, in its most degrading forms, was the besetting sin of the heathen world. The Christian converts often became contaminated by it. "It lingered in the flesh when the spirit had cast it off; . . . even within the pale of the Church it sometimes assumed the form of a mystic Christianity. There were those who imagined themselves to have found in licentiousness the true freedom of the gospel." Chap. iv. points in this direction. (*b*) In the Church itself there reigned the spirit of disorder—enhanced, in the case of Thessalonica, by the idleness engendered by the belief in the nearness of the second coming. There are constantly recurring evidences of this in these two Epistles. (*c*) There were scruples of conscience as to the observance of days, and eating with the unclean and unbelievers. The contact of Jews and Gentiles in the privileges and work of the Christian Church could hardly fail in the first days of Christianity to give rise to such questions. And (*d*) disputes about doctrines and teachers bred dissensions which marred the beauty of the Christian life. In all these different ways, "unreasonable and wicked men" (2 Thess. iii. 2) worked mischief, which needed to be guarded against and withstood. The apostle, in view of such defects, desired to revisit Thessalonica, that by means of further instruction, and exhortation, and warning he might "perfect that which is lacking." In the name of his Master and theirs, he desired to counsel them in the spirit of the words, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which

remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." The word rendered "perfect" here is not to be overlooked. It means to readjust, to restore. It is used, in surgical language, of the setting of a bone or a joint. It is used of repairing, mending of nets. It is also used of refitting and strengthening of ships. In each and in all of these senses we have fitting illustrations suggested to us. Paul's aim, and the aim of all Christ's ministering servants in the exercise of their ministry among those who are associated together in Church fellowship, is this, that they may "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10). They labour "for the perfecting of the saints" (Eph. iv. 12). Believers, whatever may be their eminence in the Christian graces, have still "lacking measures of their faith." They need to be "fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." They need to be perfected in knowledge and practice if they would rightly be owned as the gospel net for the bringing in of others. They need ceaselessly to be repaired, built up, if, as the Church of Christ,—the Ark of all safety,—they would withstand all the rude billows of the world, and—

"—sit on the stormy gulf
A halcyon bird of calm."

Thus, filling up or perfecting that which is lacking in faith on earth, Christ's Church will at last pass into heaven, where there will be nothing that is lacking in glory. Howe has beautifully said, speaking of the

blessedness of the righteous: "We read indeed of certain *ὑστερήματα πίστεως*, afterings of faith (as it may be significantly enough rendered, let but the novelty of the expression be pardoned), 'things lacking,' we read it; but there will be here no *ὑστερήματα δόξης*, afterings of glory. What is perfect admits no increase, it is already full; and why should not a full glory satisfy?" It is "fulness of joy."

LECTURE XII.

“Christian charity is friendship to all the world; and when friendships were the noblest things in the world, charity was little, like the sun drawn in at a chink, or his beams drawn into the centre of a burning-glass; but Christian charity is friendship expanded like the face of the sun when it mounts above the Eastern hills.”—BISHOP TAYLOR, quoted in SHAFTESBURY’S Characteristics.

“Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you; and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you; to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameably in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”—1 THESS. iii. 11–13.

THE apostle proceeds to describe more fully what were the elements in this his ceaseless and earnest prayer. He does so, not by specifying them simply, but by anew throwing his whole description of them into the form of present and direct petition. We have thus an instance of a very marked characteristic of the Pauline Epistles—the tendency which the course of the argument ever has to break forth into prayer. Such outbursts of devotional feeling are seen everywhere amid the varied personal allusions of the apostle to his labours, and trials, and joys, and the many loving references which he makes to the temporal and spiritual state of his brethren in Christ Jesus. In this respect Paul’s Epistles bear a striking resemblance to David’s Psalms.

We have to notice very carefully to whom this

ejaculatory prayer is addressed. "Now God Himself, even our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." It is quite evident that our Lord and Saviour—the man Christ Jesus—the ascended and glorified Redeemer—is in the apostle's thought viewed as standing in the same relation to human prayer as God the Father. The prayer of Paul's heart is addressed to both. There are thus implied "Equality of power and unity of will" of Christ with God. And these imply "a higher unity—even unity of essence" (Eadie). While, then, our Lord is distinguished from the Father in personality, He is one with Him in Godhead, and therefore is He rightly addressed in the language of prayer. Prayer is the voice of human weakness addressed to infinite power—

"That mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God."

And Christ Jesus, thus addressed, is God.

In the early Church it was not uncommonly held that prayer for outward, temporal things should be presented alone to God the Father, and that it is only in connection with spiritual things that God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are to be approached. Our passage disproves this view. We are warranted in directly supplicating the Son, seated as He is at the right hand of God, and swaying the sceptre of universal dominion; and in regard to the whole wide range of our wants, in the region of providence and of redemption alike, "He is Lord of all." None the less, avoiding the tendency, so marked in the devotions of the Moravian Brethren, of praying almost exclusively to Christ, we may best put it thus—prayer is to God the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

The word “Himself” here—“now God *Himself*”—has an emphasis resting upon it. It suggests a contrast. Paul had failed to accomplish his desire. Human agency had been frustrated. Satan had (chap. ii. 18) so far prevailed. Some obstacle, which Paul felt justified in tracing to Satanic influence, blocked up his pathway to Thessalonica. But he now in prayer turns to God Himself, with the confidence of filial reverence and love ; he calls Him “our Father,” and his petition is that He would “direct our way unto you.” He prays that God may remove obstacles and prosper his desire. His prayer was in the spirit of the words, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. x. 23). He says here to his Thessalonian friends what he says to those in Rome (Rom. i. 9, 10), “Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers ; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.” He knew that if “the Lord, before whom he walked, sent His angel with him, and prospered his way,” then all the forces of the opposing kingdom of darkness would at once be brushed aside. Calvin says : “Quo significat nusquam posse nos movere pedem cum successu, nisi Dei auspiciis, ubi tamen ipse manum porrigit, Satanam frustra omnia molire, ut cursum nostrum avertat.” It is the voice of conscious weakness, of daily Christian experience, as well as of divine wisdom, which cries, “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

Ver. 12 gives us the second part of Paul’s ceaseless and persevering prayer, “And (but) the Lord make you to increase and abound in love.” As if he had said, whatever is the divine pleasure in regard to

myself and my visiting of you, meanwhile may yours be all spiritual prosperity, from the Lord Jesus Christ, from Him who Himself is the divine love manifested, and in whom all blessings are embraced. "To increase and abound"—the words together represent the one conception—to increase, and by so increasing to abound. They portray the grace of love as the Christian's true riches. To have this is to abound in true wealth—a wealth which no outward reverses can lessen; which increases the more it is expended—which is always useful and can never be exhausted. In the case of the Thessalonians there was "that which was lacking" in their love as well as in their faith—at least, it is evident that however conspicuous they were for the possession of this grace, it still admitted of indefinite increase. This love has this prominence assigned it here, for it is the very essence of the renewed life; it is "the fulfilling of the law." It is "the bond of perfectness." It is the soul of all the Christian graces. It binds them together into perfectness. As all beauty is cold and lifeless, unless there be soul speaking through it, spreading its breathing grace over it, so all the elements of moral beauty, if we can conceive of them as having an existence at all without love, would be lifeless, worthless without it. It must be the informing soul of them all. We are therefore "above all things to put on charity." This love is a Christian grace, for it turns first of all to Christ Jesus. It lives only in fellowship with Him, and it is He who makes His people to increase and abound in it. This love in its inner circle is "one toward another." In this aspect of it, it is something far in advance of mere friendship. It has often been noticed, and very justly, that in the ancient heathen world friendship was the

very soul of all social existence. The poetry and philosophy of the Greeks and Romans, for instance, are never weary of its celebration as one of the noblest life-goods. Their literature abounds with the most lovely illustrations of it. The love of friends is represented by them as the mightiest of all human impulses—an agency powerful to break down all restraints, able even to burst asunder the bands of Hades itself. It was, in fact, a kind of religion to those nations which knew not God; perhaps upon the whole, in the absence, or at least the partial suppression of the domestic affections, the purest and most ennobling kind they had, keeping the heart of man from dissolving into unutterable corruption and despair. Now it has often been objected to Christianity—indeed, it was a commonplace with the English deists of a past age—that it does its best to destroy all this; that the religion of our blessed Master is essentially selfishness (*vid.* Rothe's *Ethic*, iv. 68, and Martensen, *Die Christliche Ethic*, specieller Theil, ii. 92), urging each one to care unduly for his own soul, and correspondingly to neglect the supreme good of others, and that thus it inculcates little more than a kind of elevated egoism. But such a passage as this, and it is only one out of very many, utterly refutes this slander. It is enough simply to say with Richard Bentley, that friendship has become in the New Testament brotherly-kindness; that friendship, under Christian influences, has not only deepened, but has also broadened. It has been transfigured into "love of the brethren"—a "loving in the truth," as the beloved disciple calls it—a fellowship one with another in no earth-born, worldly element, but in the highest and most spiritual, in "the common salvation."

But Paul tells us here that this Christian love is to be shown not merely "one toward another," but also "toward all men." Its circle, the sphere of its influence, is wide as humanity itself. There is to be no limit to its diffusion. Christianity has broken down all barriers of race or of creed. It has struck the word "barbarian" out of the dictionary of mankind, and replaced it by "brother." It tells men of the divine philanthropy (Tit. iii. 4), and it enjoins upon its adherents the exhibition of a like philanthropy in *their* own character and conduct. The question, "who is my neighbour?" ought never to be uttered by Christian lips. The Thessalonians are exhorted to love "all men"—even their Gentile and Jewish fellow-citizens, who were their persecutors. Nor ought the question ever to be put, how is this all-embracing love to be shown?

"Keep up the fire,
And leave the generous flames to shape themselves."

Love in its very nature resents such inquiries, because they indicate the want of that self-abandonment which is the very life of love in the heart.

"To great and small things love alike can reach,
And cares for each as all, and all as each."

So warm are the apostle's feelings of regard towards his Thessalonian friends, that he could claim to be himself a pattern for their example in regard to this Christian grace. He not only inculcates it, he also exemplifies it. He says, "as we do toward you," *i.e.* even as we also increase and abound in love toward you. His love to them was fervid, ceaseless, self-sacrificing. He was "willing to impart unto them his

own soul, because they were dear unto him." It was, in a word, a Christlike love. Hence he could commend it to others as an example. He could beseech them to become, in regard to it, "followers of us, and of the Lord" (chap. i. 6).

The point of comparison here, however, is probably not the strength and purity of the apostle's love, so much as its free and all-embracing character. He loved the Thessalonians as his brethren in Christ; but antecedently to their being his Christian brethren, he had loved them, and yearned over them as members of the human race, sinners, and needing the salvation, which God's love provides in His Son. It was this, his love toward all men, which first led him to Thessalonica, and issued in their conversion.

This increasing and abounding in love may be regarded as the end of all Christian striving, for after all it is the possession of this grace which brings men on earth nearest to the gate of heaven. But it is represented in the present connection not as an end in itself, but rather as a means, ver. 13, "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness."

He would teach them that Christian love, going out towards others in blessing, comes back again laden with new blessings to the soul. The "hearts" of Christ's people become in this way "established." Where there is love to one another and to all men, there is of necessity a steady purpose and aim imparted to the whole life. The heart in this way becomes "united" (Ps. lxxxvi. 11). All its impulses go forth in the one direction—in the way of holiness "unblameable." Such a loving heart diffuses the fragrance of its own sweet life—the life of "holiness," and is thus rewarded

by being declared “blameless,” and that too “before God.” It has His approving smile resting upon it—the smile of “even our Father” in heaven. Thus it is that Christian love is recompensed with the assurance of the divine love. It makes the heart more stedfast—gives it greater purity of character—growing likeness to Christ Jesus, and therefore makes it the recipient of the favour of His Father and our Father, His God and our God.

Even amid the imperfections and limitations of earth and time, something of this experience is the believer’s possession. But none the less the more advanced he is in the divine life, the more is he conscious of doubts and waverings of heart—the more does he feel himself blameworthy—the more does he mourn over his unholiness in the sight of God, his Father. Hence the apostle in the closing clause carries our thoughts forward to that

“One far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

He adds, “at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (comp. 1 Cor. i. 7, 8). As at the close of chap. ii., so at the close of chap. iii., the culminating point of the apostle’s argument or exhortation is the coming of the Saviour. This one thought indeed is the pivot on which the whole Epistle in its varied exhortation and comforting and charging (chap. ii. 11) is made to turn. It is utterly tasteless, and worse, to see in the present verse only an allusion to Christ’s coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, with its temple, and its worship. That, indeed, was “a judicial epoch when the moral condition and character of men were scrutinized and revealed.” But it was

in no real sense the consummation of the blessedness of Christ's people. It has been argued, however, in support of this view (*vid. The Parousia*, p. 164), thus, "Is St. Paul still without his crown of rejoicing? Are his Thessalonian converts still waiting for the Son of God from heaven? Are they not yet 'established in holiness before God,' not yet presented holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight? For this is their felicity 'at the coming of the Lord Jesus,' and not before. If that event, therefore, has never yet taken place, what became of their eager expectation and hope? If they could have known that hundreds and thousands of years must first slowly run their course, could St. Paul and his children in the faith have been thus filled with transport at the thought of the coming glory?" Now the simple and satisfactory answer to this objection is, that the apostle's language surveys both the near and the far horizon. He is speaking of present Christian duty—of its blessings in the way of Christian progress on earth, and in the last clause he naturally carries forward the thought to the perfection of the Christian character in heaven—that, however, as finally declared only, although existing before—"at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then truly and fully are Christ's people before God, even their Father, beholding the king's face—then "unblameable," for "love shall cover a multitude of sins,"—then "in holiness," for "they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is." Then their hearts are "established" in joy for evermore. The apostle very naturally, and with a special tenderness, speaks of this future, in order to draw away the thoughts of his Thessalonian friends from the troubles and trials, the sorrows and sins, of their present

lot. He would have them think of the lot of their future inheritance, that they may be faithful unto the end.

Hence the coming of the Lord, further, is depicted in its most lovely and attractive aspects. Not the terrors, but the joys of that day are described. It is the coming of Christ Jesus "with all His saints." His holy ones are represented as attending Him (*meta*), and "swelling the majesty of His train." He is to come "with clouds"—that portrays the dignity of His approach. "With all His saints"—that represents His love towards His own—His oneness with them—His delight in them. But who are His saints—His holy ones of whom it is declared that they are to be His retinue when He comes? There is nothing in the passage itself which can direct us to a certain answer. Some say, they are the angels. And we know that the Lord is represented in many places as thus attended. In 2 Thess. i. 7 we read, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels." And Jesus Himself declares (Matt. xvi. 27), "the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels," and again, "and all the holy angels with Him." It is therefore quite in accordance with the analogy of Scripture to understand by the saints here the angelic intelligences. There are, however, objections to this view. The angels are nowhere in the New Testament simply called saints. Nor does the allusion to angels so well fit into the context. It is better, therefore, to take the words in their simple meaning—Christ's sanctified ones: those of His people who by death have, as the old Roman phrase puts it, "passed over into the ranks of the majority." We read in the next chapter (ver. 14), "even so them also which sleep in

Jesus will God bring with Him," and in 1 Cor. vi. 2. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" These sanctified ones are pre-eminently "His" (*Christ's*, not *God's* here). His purchased possession—His crown of glory. Ananias, in speaking to the Lord Jesus of Saul's persecution of the Christians, had said (Acts ix. 13), "How much evil he hath done to *Thy* saints at Jerusalem." There may be a reminiscence of these very words in the apostle's present language—the very saints, some of whom he had himself helped to persecute even unto the death. The risen and glorified Saviour is here described as standing in the same relation to His people in heaven as He stands to them on earth. They are called "His saints" both in earth and in heaven—His holy ones—His purchased possession. These accompany the glorified Saviour in His coming—and His saints, those whose hearts are stablished in holiness before God, meet them, that together they may be the one company in Christ Jesus. Christ comes with His saints from heaven to take His saints on earth, and join them in brotherly love into one fold—one glad company of holy ones.

To understand by Christ's "saints" both angels and glorified men, as many do, relying upon the word "all," is not so consistent with the context as is the view which restricts the word to the spirits of just men made perfect. The Thessalonian Christians are encouraged in their efforts and prayers after holiness by the thought that at their Saviour's coming they are to meet with "all His saints"—men like themselves, who once on earth had exercised themselves unto godliness, and have now reached it in heaven.

LECTURE XIII.

“ Si avaritia prostrata est, exsurgit libido.”—CYPRIAN, *de Mort.* 3.

“ Omnium malorum fons cupiditas.”—LACTANTIUS, v. 6.

“ Virtus est, iram cohibere, cupiditatem compescere, libidinem refrenare.”—LACTANTIUS, vi. 5.

“ Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk,—that ye abound more and more. For ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles which know not God; that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified. For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore, he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth His Holy Spirit unto you.”—1 THESS. iv. 1-8.

THE last chapter closes with the apostle's prayer, that his way may be directed to Thessalonica, and above all that the hearts of his converts in that city may be established “unblameable in holiness, before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” Their progress in all that pertains to the divine life is thus represented as a divine work. But none the less it is also man's work. If men would be established by God in holiness, they must also “exercise themselves unto godliness.” Hence the appeal which is now made by the apostle to his readers to do their part. “Furthermore, then;” the words indicate a transi-

tion from the preceding narrative style, with its impassioned prayer to God, to the hortatory and didactic. They are also the first faint hint that the letter is drawing near its close. The word "then" seems to throw the thought back upon the context. It implies that, seeing the apostle's prayer was that they might be established in heart at the coming of the Saviour, they ought on that account to give heed to his appeal, "we beseech you, brethren." The word in its New Testament usage means to entreat as one friend does another. It is the asking of one who is, or places himself, on an equality with those whom he addresses. In the very expression we are thus admitted to see the apostle in the simple, humble earnestness of his appeal—he entreats his friends. But this is not all. He is also a divinely-commissioned teacher. Hence he exhorts—"and exhort you." He might have stood upon his dignity (chap. ii. 6-8), and commanded. But as when he was with them he had been "gentle among them" as a nursing mother, and (chap. ii. 11) had charged them as a father does his children, so now in writing, the same gentleness of his dealing with them appears. Such entreaty and exhortation, he knew, had far greater power over the heart than mere commands could have. The still, small voice of affection is in reality more potent than the thunders of the law. It reaches at once the citadel of the heart, and the heart guides the will, and the will renews the life. Paul sought by the *entreaty* of love to win the *obedience* of love. It is thus that God Himself in His Son draws near to men. It was thus that Christ Jesus, the Good Teacher, dealt with the consciences of His hearers. It is thus that those to whom is entrusted "the ministry of recon-

ciliation" must seek to speak in His name. All entreaty and exhortation are to be "by the Lord Jesus." In Him—He is the sphere in whom all Christian instruction is to be given, and in whom alone it can be efficacious. It is given by His command, it is enforced by His love, it is invested with the awful solemnities of His final coming. All, therefore, who speak in the interests of Christian truth must say, "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did *beseech* you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

The burden of this entreaty and exhortation is, "that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." They had received the gospel (chap. ii. 13) in no mere external way. They had accorded to it the loving recognition and acceptance of the heart. Nor had it been inoperative in them. It had "effectually worked" in them. They had therefore in faith received Christ Jesus Himself, of whom the word of God testifies; and, with Him, all the divine directions as to the believer's walk, that is, his life—that which must be the outward manifestation of the inner reception of the truth. They are accordingly counselled, having received the faith of Christ, to do the works of Christ. This correspondence between faith and work is what "pleases God." It is obedience to His own command, given to the Father of the faithful, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." It is a "walking worthy of God, who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory." This is the Christian aim, "Not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts." Every one must say with Paul, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

Having been instructed as to Christian conduct, they are urged by the apostle to abound in it more and more. In the form of the sentence there seems to lie something like implied commendation. There is a recognition of their already abounding in the fruits of the Christian life. The apostle is ever ready, eager even, to praise whatsoever comes under his notice as praiseworthy. But he would none the less assert that no attainment, however high in the conduct of life, can be regarded as a goal. There must be a constant and persistent going on unto perfection. God, who in one sense is satisfied with little on the part of His people, is in another sense always requiring from them more. There is always, and in every case, a gulf between what a man has received of Christian knowledge and what a man acts out in his daily Christian conduct. All progress is but the lessening of this—the making of the severance less, till at last His people “shall walk with Him in white ; for they are worthy.”

The apostle appeals to the remembrance of his friends. They could not plead ignorance of what Christian duty is. Nor does he suppose that they could for a moment desire to do so. He says, “For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.” He would remind them of the precepts—the directions which as a parting gift he had left with them. He appeals to their own knowledge of these, as he often in this Epistle does (i. 5, ii. 1, 2, 5, 11, iii. 4). “As ye know”—that formula of address appears over and over again, just as we might expect in a letter penned soon after his departure from them. But while he speaks of these injunctions which he had given, he describes them in their true preciousness and importance. They were in reality not

his own commands, but those of *his* Master and theirs, — “which we gave you by the Lord Jesus.” They were uttered indeed by the apostle’s lips, but it was the Head of the Church Himself who had guided him in the utterance. Hence he says in effect here, as he does in 1 Cor. vii. 10, “I command, yet not I, but the Lord.”

Now these precepts or directions are not to be understood generally as the simple teaching of the gospel. They are evidently such as were specially suited to the character and circumstances of those to whom they were addressed. They are specified in what follows, and they are chiefly two—warnings in respect of sins of the flesh, and the sin of covetousness. This will appear as we proceed in our exposition. These were then as now the two leading tendencies of the heathen world; and being considered by heathen moralists as belonging to the class of matters called indifferent, they needed to be all the more singled out by the apostle as dangers which must be carefully shunned by all who bore the name of Christ Jesus. Ver. 3, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.” The divine will had been expressed to the Thessalonians in these apostolic injunctions—and the simple expression of this divine will brings with it the enforcement of their duty in regard to them. The will of the Creator must ever be the rule of the creature. The revelation of the divine will is also of necessity the revelation of human duty—especially, may we not say, of Christian duty. Obedience to God’s will is the proper manifestation of the renewed heart’s gratitude. It is the proof that the gospel of God has become the gospel of our salvation. Hence each believer seeks to say—

“Through heaven and earth
God’s will moves freely, and I follow it,
As colour follows light.”

This is the perfection of all sanctification. This, then—there is great emphasis on the word “this,” as showing the importance of what it points to—*this* is your sanctification, which God wills—this is your establishment in holiness (chap. iii. 13), unblameable before God. He wills it as seeking the highest welfare of His creatures—“that ye should abstain from fornication.” We are told that “the commandment of the Lord is pure.” It requires separation from a world of sin, and consequent consecration to a life of purity. The warfare in which His people are enlisted, and from which there can be no discharge, aims at the victory of the spirit over the flesh. As the means and end of true sanctification they are to “abstain from all fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” When Paul wrote this letter, he was in Corinth. In that city, even more than in others of the ancient world, sins of sensuality were not only tolerated, but even openly indulged in, and that too under the guise of religion. We can understand, then, that the apostle’s mind was very directly turned towards this evil, and that his anxiety was intensified lest his converts in Thessalonica, where similar corrupting influences were at work, might not be sufficiently alive to its deadliness. Hence his words of solemn warning and command, “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence.” Notwithstanding very much that has been said against it, the exposition commends itself most to favour which understands by “vessel” the human body. The expression is

frequently used, as if it had almost ceased to have a metaphorical meaning, for "the human body." Compare "vessels of wrath and mercy" (Rom. ix. 22, 23); "the weaker vessel" (1 Pet. iii. 7); "a vessel unto honour" (2 Tim. ii. 21); "earthen vessels" (2 Cor. iv. 7). The injunction, therefore, is that each one—each individual member of Christ's Church—should in regard to his own body attain and maintain the mastery of it—recovering it from the bondage of corruption, and possessing it, as the Lord's freedman, in self-restraint—keeping it in all right regard and honour, and not in the lustfulness of impure desire. The apostle would have his Christian converts to be a striking, an outstanding contrast in this respect with their Gentile fellow-citizens. He adds, "Even as the Gentiles which know not God." The frequent recurrence of the pronoun "you" in the passage is emphatic; it serves to distinguish in a very marked way between believers and the heathen, of whom Scripture affirms that "God gave them over to uncleanness in the lusts of their hearts, to *dishonour their own bodies*." These heathen are described as not knowing God, not knowing, therefore, "His will, even their sanctification." To know in this connection is to recognise, to be acquainted with Him by standing in the relation of friendship with Him. In this sense the heathen know not God. They know Him not in His holiness, for it is the pure in heart alone who see God. They know Him only as an unknown God, not as a loving Father in Christ Jesus. It is elsewhere put thus, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God," or again, in Gal. iv. 8, 9, "When ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have

known God, or rather are known of God" (*vid.* Ellicott *ad loc.*). The apostle would say then, that from the heathen, in this their ignorance, such dishonouring of their own bodies is what might be expected. But to believers he says, "Ye have not so learned Christ." They, being His redeemed people, have even their bodies redeemed from the service of Satan; and in personal chastity henceforth "bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus," that is, of His ownership over them.

Thus far about uncleanness. But, notwithstanding strong statements to the contrary from many and leading commentators, we hold that the reference ends here, and that another, though an allied subject,—a new type of sin,—now comes under review. Ver. 6 does not continue the reference to sins of the flesh, but introduces us to the second cardinal sin of the heathen world—covetousness, greediness, with its disregard for the rights of others. The transition may seem to be abrupt and unnatural, but in reality this is an argument in support of the view taken. A glance at Rom. i. 29; 1 Cor. v. 10, vi. 9; Eph. v. 3; Col. iii. 5; Heb. xiii. 4, 5, shows us that it is entirely after the manner of Paul to connect very closely sensuality and rapacity. He passes directly from the idea of the one to that of the other. Nor is it difficult to account for this; these sins are but different developments of the natural man's self-indulgence. They are the two forms which it most readily assumes. They are both forms of the degraded worship of self, "which is idolatry." In other words, "impurity and covetousness may be said to divide between them nearly the whole domain of human selfishness and vice" (Lightfoot on Col. iii. 5). But let us turn now

to the apostle's denunciation of this sin of covetousness. Ver. 6, "That no man go beyond or defraud his brother in *any* matter." This, too, is God's will—even His people's sanctification. The word "*any*" is in italics. It does not represent anything in the original. The clause rather means, in the matter in hand, whatever it may be—in the business transaction, whatever it may be, in which a believer has dealings with his brother Christian or his brother man—for all men are brethren so far as the obligations of doing justly are concerned—in this no one is to trespass against his neighbour, and overreach and defraud him. The well-defined boundary line which Christian brotherly-kindness lays down is never to be overstepped. The taking of any unfair advantage of another, in whatever way it may be done, is forbidden. As Paul says in a somewhat similar connection, 1 Cor. vi. 7-9, "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" This sin is not one that flourishes only on heathen soil. It is visible enough in some one or other of its many forms in Christian lands, and even within the borders of Christian Churches. There are those who may be able to count up the columns of their largesses, even to the cause of Christ, against whom none the less God's book of remembrance has equally long catalogues of wrongs they have inflicted upon their neighbours. The offerings of all such are an abomination unto God. They are *unclean*.

The apostle adds, "because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you

and testified." When he had been present with them, he had turned their thoughts to this very point, and he had left with them this solemn testimony, which he now repeats, as a warning. In regard to all such sins, whether of impurity or of injustice,—there being no distinction between sins which are infamous, and sins which society may even regard as almost respectable,—God, or rather if we fix down the term Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ is the avenger. The word has two sides. It speaks of His righting matters towards him who is wronged and towards him who does the wrong. The man who patiently suffers under any form of injustice is avenged of his adversary, — the Lord is on his side, — and the evil-doer is punished. The Greek proverb has been well cited in this connection (*Hom. Batrachai*, 97): ἔχει Θεὸς ἐκδικὸν ὄμμα, God has an avenging eye. The conscience and experience of universal humanity declare that this witness is true. While this vengeance is oftentimes tardy in its approach, it is sure. Men say, "The mill of God grinds late, but grinds to powder;" and again, "Vengeance has leaden feet, but iron hands;" "leaden feet to mark how slow its approaches often are, iron hands to signify the crushing weight with which it comes down at the last" (Trench's sermon on "The long-suffering of Christ"). But this divine vengeance—the outward manifestation of God's wrath going forth in judgment against such sins—is often visible; usually so, indeed, in the present moral government of the world. It is not altogether a future thing. For instance, in the case of profligacy, does not the body, wherewith the sin was done, become oftentimes that which endures the punishment, the blighting touch of the angel of judgment falling

upon it? and as for covetousness, he whose gains from it are greatest, is often he whose poverty of soul imprints in the very lineaments the marks of anxiety and toil. Common consent calls the sordid man a “miser”—the very type of all wretchedness. Truly the Lord is an avenger often here, always hereafter. If, then, we would have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, “all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints.” We have to seek rather in all uprightness to declare, “we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.” “For” (ver. 7) “God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” He has invited—effectually called His people, with a calling from on high, unto good works—not to impurity, but to sanctification, cleanness of heart and of life. They are required to “walk worthy of God, who hath called them into His kingdom and glory.” The apostle cannot leave this theme without adding yet another word of solemn warning—his earnestness is winged by what he saw around him of heathen life in Corinth, and by the dangers which he knew beset his friends in Thessalonica. “He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit.” Seeing God has given His people such a glorious calling, whosoever sets these injunctions at naught, makes them void, rejects them, rejects and despises not Paul, or any other apostle or teacher,—that were indeed comparatively a small matter,—but God Himself, the God who graciously calls men to holiness, and for this end has given, by sending (εἰς), His Spirit of holiness to those who accept His call, and the God who, in the case of despisers of His mercy and grace, is

“the avenger.” They then that “despise reproof shall eat of the fruit of their own way.” The wise man says, “He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth His ways shall die.”

LECTURE XIV.

"Labour, that companion of vertue, the mainteyner of honestye, the encrease of healthe and wealthinesse, which admitteth nothinge, in a manner into his compagne that standeth not with vertue and honestye; and therefore sayth the old poete Epichermus verye pretelye in 'Xenophon,' that God selleth vertue, and all other good thinges to men for labour."

ROGER ASCHAM, *Torophilus*.

*"Be sure, no earnest work
Of any honest creature, howbeit weak,
Imperfect, ill-adapted, fails so much,
It is not gathered as a grain of sand
To enlarge the sum of human action used
For carrying out God's end. No creature works
So ill, observe, that therefore he's cashiered.
The honest, earnest man must stand and work,
The woman also,—otherwise she drops
At once below the dignity of man,
Accepting serfdom. Free men freely work.
Whoever fears God, fears to sit at ease."*

MRS. BROWNING, *Aurora Leigh*.

"But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you: that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing."
—1 THESS. iv. 9-12.

TURNING now, and, as it were, with a sense of relief, from warnings against impurity and covetousness, but still keeping in view the aim of his whole exhortation, viz. "the will of God, even your sanctification," the apostle resumes (*vid.* chap. iii. 12) the subject of brotherly love. The cultivation of that Christian grace is the best safeguard against any relapse on the part of believers into the besetting sins of the

Gentile world. "But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you." In regard to the two previous warnings, he had special need to write. Necessity was laid upon him; not that the Thessalonians are to be supposed to have been generally, or to any unusual extent, transgressors in these matters, but simply because they were living in the midst of the most corrupting forms of evil, and could not escape outward contact with them. But it was otherwise in regard to brotherly love. The very position of the Thessalonian Church was greatly favourable to their cultivation of this Christian grace. The world being against them, all the tendencies of the age and society being repugnant to them, they would naturally be thrown very constantly and closely into each other's fellowship. The bonds which united them were bonds not merely of a common faith, but also of common trial. They were brethren and companions in tribulation. In Him who is their *Kinsman-Redeemer*, His people felt, as they must ever do, that they in the highest sense are of one *kindred*, and that feeling, that conviction, ever shows itself in brotherly *kindness*. It is said here that the Thessalonian Christians abounded in this grace. It was their crown of glory. There was no need for Paul or any other to write to them about it. By this somewhat rhetorical mode of address—one which is characteristic of his style (*vid.* 2 Cor. ix. 1; Philem. 19)—he would gently urge them the more. While commending them for what they had already attained to, he would, in so doing, recommend progress—higher attainment still. He says, in effect, to them, "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. xiii. 1). But he adds, "For ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." Our Lord has said (John vi. 45):

“It is written in the prophets: and they shall be all taught of God.” The covenant which God made with His people was this: “I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts” (Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 10). The fulness of the blessing embraced in this covenant is the possession of the New Testament Church. Its members are taught of God by the influences of the Holy Spirit guiding them into all truth,—enabling them to believe on the name of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another, as He gave them commandment,—enabling them to accept the Saviour’s words, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” It is divine teaching this. It is illustrated and enforced by divine example. It is accepted and acted out by divine aid vouchsafed. God Himself is love, and what His people learn of Him must consequently be love too. Hence the exhortation, taking the form of argument, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” And in the only instance where we are directly enjoined to be followers,—imitators of God,—it is love that is the sphere in which this imitation is to be shown. “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and *walk in love*, as Christ also has loved us” (Eph. v. 1, 2). It is instructive, further, to notice that this injunction, just as in our passage, stands in closest connection with warnings against uncleanness and covetousness). We may say then with Bengel, “*Doctrinæ divinæ vis confluit in (eis) amorem.*” Now all true love translates itself into action. It did so eminently in the case of the Thessalonians. Hence the apostle goes on to confirm his good opinion of them in this respect by alluding to the evidence on which it rested. Ver. 10,

“And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia.” The word “do” stands opposed to the word “taught.” In Christian morals there can never be sanctioned any divorce between theory and practice. In earthly things we often have to contrast knowing and doing—the speculative and the practical. But it is otherwise in things heavenly. To know the truth is itself the obligation to do the truth. No man has learned anything of God, if his life fails to afford evidence of it. Indeed, knowing and doing act upon each other. Knowing is fruitful of good deeds, and doing, on the other hand, is fruitful of good thoughts. “If any man will *do* His will, he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” Our Lord has declared that the wise man alone is he who “*heareth* these sayings of Mine, and *doeth* them.” *His* house alone rests upon the rock. Isaac Taylor (*Saturday Evening*, xiii.) has well said: “Celestial truth is a jewel in a pix; but unless it be worn by its possessor, it might as well have rested in its quarry.” “If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them.”

But this doing of the Thessalonians had a wide range. Their love had a wide sphere for its activity. *All* their brother Christians throughout the *whole* of Macedonia had been revived and comforted by it. Throughout the whole of Northern Greece the members of the several Christian churches, probably those in Philippi and Berea specially, had enjoyed communion with one another. Paul learned this, doubtless, from Timothy's report. But what form did this brotherly intercourse assume? Possibly the circulation of Luke's Gospel, in whole or in part, to which honourable work, as we have already seen, Thessalonica appears to have been directly called. We read (chap. i. 8), “From

you sounded out the word of the Lord in Macedonia and Achaia." If the supposition be well founded, that this Gospel was already in the hands of Christians in Thessalonica, we cannot conceive of their having brotherly love and yet withholding it from others—that would have been at once unfaithfulness to their Master and callousness towards their fellow-men. But this brotherly love also manifested itself—and the allusion seems most to point in this direction—in pecuniary assistance rendered to those who were in want. Indeed, the common word for "fellowship" (*κοινωνία*), when it came to be lifted up to a place in Christian literature, was almost immediately tinged with the beauty of a new meaning. In the early dawn of Christianity the word signified communicating of one's substance—contributing to one another's necessities. This is just what we might expect. Rejoicing together in Christ's salvation, the first believers felt—with an intensity which, owing to the very progress of Christianity, has now been largely lost—the obligation of mutual sympathy and aid. In all this ministry of love, then, the Thessalonians were conspicuous. The hearts of many brethren in Macedonia were blessing their benevolence.

None the less, Paul wrote to them: "But we beseech (rather, exhort, as in ver. 1) you, brethren, that ye increase (rather, abound, as in ver. 1) more and more." He had prayed thus on their behalf, and now he adds exhortation to prayer (chap. iii. 12). Their brotherly love was to show its life in continuous growth. There can be no halting point in this, or in any other Christian grace. Christ's people must "go on unto perfection." We have in these two verses suggested to us the strong bond of union existing in

the early Church between Christian communities which were yet geographically apart from one another. As having the same dangers to encounter, the same battle to fight, the same Captain of their salvation to lead them, the same triumph to win, they are seen taking an earnest and active interest in each other's welfare. As the ancient Greek colonists practised the rite of cherishing on the altars of their public halls the perpetual fire that had first been kindled at the parent hearth of home—the mother-city of Athens ; so, we may say, it was with these scattered sections of the early Church. Separate though they were, they yet felt they were one in sympathy and interest. The triple flame of faith, and love, and hope burned more or less brightly in them all. They thus claimed the same origin, held the same truth, and sought the same ends. Together they formed the one “holy nation,” and looked forward to the one ideal city, the “Jerusalem which is above, and is free, and is the mother of us all.” No religion but that of Christ could give birth to such a commonwealth, of which the heathen satirist, Lucian, has said, that their Lawgiver had actually persuaded its members that they were all brethren—one in the bonds of a friendship stronger than death itself.

But passing from this aspect of Christian life and work, on which he delights to linger, so frequently has he reverted to it, the apostle now turns (ver. 11) to allude to what appears to have been an abuse of even this Godlike Christian grace. Wherever there is light, there is shadow—there is always in the fairest embroidery work what has been called “the wrong side of the stuff.” So it is ever in Christian morals,—so apparently was it in Thessalonica. The very abund-

ance of Christian liberality had engendered a tendency on the part of those who showed it to be restless, fussy, meddling ; and a corresponding tendency on the part of those who were the recipients of bounty to be idle and dependent. We know that such evil results, unless they be carefully guarded against, are sure to spring up in circumstances such as those which are here described. They seem to have been further intensified by the erroneous views commonly entertained regarding the nearness of the Lord's coming, to which direct reference is immediately afterwards made. A similar state of disorder, and panic, and idleness has not been unknown in subsequent periods of the Church's history. Towards the close of the ninth century especially, we find something like a parallel with this prevalent mood of the Thessalonian Church. There was then a current belief that in the year 1000 the Saviour would appear, and that with His appearance the day of judgment and the end of the world would arrive. In view thereof a general panic set in. Men's minds became unsettled, and in many cases altogether unhinged. "Many abandoned their homes and their families, and repaired to the Holy Land ; others made over their lands to the Church, or permitted them to lie uncultivated, and the whole course of ordinary life was violently disturbed and deranged" (*vid.* Waddington's *Church History*, cited by the author of *The Parousia*). The new world, too, even within living memory, has seen the same phenomenon. In the year 1843 some districts in the United States of America were thrown into fanatical excitement and idle disorder by the belief having laid hold of the popular mind that the day of the Lord was at hand. Hence, in the presence of agitation, arising from erroneous fixing of "the

times and the seasons," the apostle gives a caution and a command, needed in his own days, and, as we have seen, not unneeded in the days which have followed: "that ye study to be quiet." Christians are to endeavour—make it a matter of personal honour—to be quiet. "Be ambitious to be unambitious" (Conybeare and Howson). The love of glory, the spirit of restless ambition, was a very passion in the Greek mind. Paul would show his readers that *Christian* ambition is a real thing too. But it shows itself not in the exciting pursuit of fame, or dignity, or power, but in stillness; not in unquiet bustle, not in "walking disorderly" (2 Thess. iii. 11), but in tranquillity, in sedateness of heart and life. There is no commendation here of listlessness, of unfeeling indifference, of wilful isolation from the activities of human toil—not these, but "a calm, steady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and measures prescribed by reason, justice, and charity, modesty and sobriety: such a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which so move that they seem ever to stand still, and never disturb one another" (Barrow). Such is the exhortation which the apostle gives to the Thessalonians. "He turns the eager stream of their vainglorious activity, loving ever to be seen, and exulting in the foam and spray of its own restlessness, into a quiet lake of religious life, clear and deep, reflecting in its peaceful mirror the calmness of heaven" (Wordsworth *ad loc.*). This injunction is not without its meaning in these later days. Earnestness and excitement are not synonymous. The promise still holds good, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Be it ours then to make the motto of our lives what Rothe took as his, "Nicht nach Ruhe sehne ich mich, aber nach Stille,"

or that favourite saying of President Garfield's in regard to every post of usefulness, even the humblest, which he adorned, "My work, my heart, my duty is here." Further, the verse runs, "and to do your own business." It was the well-known characteristic of these Greek populations to be busy-bodies. This spirit would easily insinuate itself within the Christian Church, more especially in a time of prevalent expectation of the end of the world. Hence the need of the injunction that each one do the duties of his own station, not interfering with those of others—never encroaching upon the rights and peace of others, interposing only in the sense of "bearing one another's burdens," and so fulfilling the law of Christ. Once more, "And to work with your own hands." The members of the church in Thessalonica were doubtless chiefly of the working classes, toiling on from day to day in the narrow lanes of life, even although among them there were "of the chief women not a few." Besides, there is ample evidence in history that there was, at this very time, widespread poverty prevailing. Compared with that of Corinth, this Christian community especially was in extreme penury (*vid.* 2 Cor. viii. 1). This, after all, may have been the chief reason why Paul, when he sojourned with them, "wrought with labour and travail night and day, that he might not be chargeable to any one of them." In such a state of general depression and poverty the very benevolence of some would give rise to the indolence of others. Hence this exhortation; and there is implied in it the dignity of labour. Our Lord Himself has made it honourable, He has sanctified it in the carpenter's shop of Nazareth. Justin Martyr says that ploughs and yokes were preserved which Christ wrought while He was among

men (*vid.* Westcott, *Study of Gospels*, p. 432). The poor man's daily toil has thus been ennobled. "Man is God's image, but a poor man is Christ's image to boot." This manual toil, too, is commended, not merely by the apostle's words, but also by his own example. The two dignities of a worker with his hands and a teacher blended in him—"toiling outwardly for the lowest of man's wants, and toiling inwardly for the highest,"—the daily bread and the bread of life alike. (See a beautiful passage in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, b. iii. c. 4, it might stand almost as a picture of Paul himself.) The "fervent in spirit," then, must be "diligent in business," in the matter of their daily callings. Work done in a Christian spirit can never have aught of meanness clinging to it.

"A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine :
 Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
 Makes that and the action fine."

These lines of George Herbert are but the expansion of the older words of Luther, "Wenn eine Magd die Stube auskehrt, kann sie ein Werk in Gott thun."

Nor is this all. Paul is evidently giving this exhortation in the immediate interest of his converts' sanctification. Idleness is a foe to all growth in grace. Spenser speaks of "sluggish idleness, the nurse of sinne." It is the very cancer of the soul. Activity, on the other hand, if it be in the line of duty, ever means progress. "The man that bestirs himself is not a lost man. God helps the worker and looks after him. It is incredible how much lies in the mere fact of activity." ("Der mensch, der sich rührt, ist nicht

verloren. Dem Thätigen hilft Gott und sieht ihm vieles nach. Es ist unglaublich, wie viel schon in dem Thätigseyn an und für sich liegt," Schelling's *Clara*, p. 46.) In view of this, therefore, we may say—

"Whoever fears God fears to sit at ease."

So long as the day of our earthly existence lasts, un-hasting, un-resting, we must work in the sphere in which infinite wisdom has placed us, till—

"Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil."

"As we commanded you." Paul teaches things new and old. He reminds his readers that there is nothing to discourage or startle them in these precepts. They had heard them all before, when he had taught in their midst. Now he is but "stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance." But he adds a motive, or rather two motives, for their obeying his earnest entreaties,—motives bearing upon their influence for good on others, and upon their own personal character alike. Ver. 12, First, "that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without." This has reference to the first clause of ver. 11,—the studying to be quiet, and to do their own business. He pleads that their conduct may be orderly, decent, comely,—for that is the meaning of the word rendered "honestly,"—in the presence of those who are without the pale of the Church—the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles around them. Such decorous and creditable living on the part of Christ's followers would prove an influence more potent than precept in bringing outsiders to the joy of His salvation. But here there meets us one of those so-called undesigned coincidences

which are always full of interest and instruction. Bishop Wordsworth calls attention to it. When Paul and his companions were in Thessalonica, they had been accused of causing a tumult (Acts xvii. 6, 7). Jason and certain brethren had been brought before the Gentile authorities, and the accusation brought against them was this: "These have turned the world upside down." Paul, apparently recalling this incident, cautions his friends now all the more earnestly so to act, so to take heed unto their ways, that their Gentile enemies might not be able, with all their malice, to accuse them of such an offence. Here is an interesting instance of apostolic considerateness and prudence.

But a second motive adduced is, "that ye may have need of nothing,"—rather, "of no man." This has reference to the second clause of ver. 11—the duty of working with their own hands. They are so to work, each one for himself, that they may not be dependent upon others, whether Christian or heathen, for support. The religion of Christ Jesus, while it makes men brethren, develops and enjoins the becoming spirit of independence and its consequent self-respect. Whatever community of goods there was, temporarily and locally, in the early Church,—whatever exercise of charity there was,—the words held good, and do so evermore. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

The rule, then, is this: the Christian must be ever ready to assist others, but he must never be ready unnecessarily to be assisted by others. Others' needs he must recognise as his own personal burden,

but his own personal burden he is not to be eager to put upon others.

Thus, "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," we are to await His coming, that we may receive His "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

LECTURE XV.

*"To thy dark land these heedless go;
But there was One
Who searched it quite through, to and fro,
And then, returning, like the sun,
Discovered all that there is done.*

*"And since His death we thoroughly see
All thy dark way;
Thy shades but thin and narrow be
Which His first looks will quickly fray;
Mists made but triumphs for the day."*

HENRY VAUGHAN.

"Ohne den Tod wäre das Leben nichts Rechtes."
ROTHE, *Stille Stunden*.

"But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep."—1 THESS. iv. 13-15.

THE apostle has just spoken of brotherly love, and the specific duties which arise out of it—the living in quietness—the conscientious diligence which ought to characterize each servant of Christ in his own individual calling. Thus is an example to be set to those who are without—thus is a spirit of self-respect and independence to be maintained. He now turns to speak of Christian hope. It is a transition to a new and all-important theme,—the hope of the Christian in regard to the saints at the second coming of their Lord. This coming of the glorified Saviour is as it were the red thread running through the whole tissue

of these two Epistles. It is more or less prominent in all its parts, giving the whole its colouring and plan. We have noticed its presence frequently before ; *e.g.* in i. 10, conversion is described as a turning from idols to serve God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. In ii. 12, Christian conduct is spoken of as a walking worthy of God who has called His people into His own kingdom and glory. In ii. 19, the apostle's own joy over his converts finds utterance in the exclamation, "Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" and in iii. 13, His prayer is that their hearts may be stablished "unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints," and more such references still await us. The apostle would teach us here what part is to be taken in this future of glory by believers, who, before that future comes, shall have passed away from earth. He would draw aside the veil, not in the interest of an idle curiosity (for there are many cognate questions for which he has no answer), but for the purpose of comforting anxious mourning hearts, correcting erroneous opinions which had become widespread, and so enabling those who receive the comfort and correction to do the more faithfully and cheerfully the duties of present daily life. We have thus a pattern set before us as to the right method and aim in which all eschatological questions ought to be discussed. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Allusion is made to the hopeless sorrowing of the others, *i.e.* "those that are without," the phrase including the Sadducæic Jews, but very specially pointing to the heathen. The heathen are described as "having no hope, and without

God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12). As for the Jews, they, it is true, had hope, but it is only the Christian Church which, as it were, possesses this hope in actual fruition. It would be a very easy thing to multiply quotations from heathen literature which speak of hopelessness in the presence of death. They may be all gathered up in the typical saying of Theocritus: ἐλπίδες ἐν ζωοῖσιν, ἀνέλπιστοι δὲ θανόντες—hopes are with the living, but the dead are hopeless. Not, indeed, that the heathen had no conception of another world—no dim gropings after immortality, but that at best these, however eagerly cherished, did not rise up to the dignity of comfort-bringing hope. "A future state, it has been said, was discovered by the ancient world, like the Copernican system, as one guess among many. Rather say it was a shadow, a thought, a hope, a poetical fancy, to which the tradition of ages had given a sort of reality. It would be idle to talk of it as a subject of belief. That the mythology which had lost its hold on this world should have retained it in reference to the shadowy forms of another, would be, indeed, incredible. Even Socrates knew not whether he was laughing at himself or others in speaking of a world to come, and of the souls of just men made perfect" (Jowett *ad loc.*). The Greek mind of antiquity, in all its varying moods, tried to shun the thought of death altogether. In a very instructive article on the Greek mind in presence of death (*Nineteenth Century*, December 1877), Mr. Percy Gardner says: "It is certain that throughout Greece, in antiquity, the future life was by the common people looked upon with distaste, if not with dread, and that they had no doctrine tending to soften its repulsion." If we study their tombs, with their sculptures and

inscriptions, we find that even in mourning they almost invariably turn the thought to the life that is past rather than to that which might be beginning. They turn uneasily from the future to the past. They shudder at the thought of a future life, at best the ghostly shadow of the present, as it rises before their view. Their mourning in bereavement finds frequent vent thus: *χρηστὲ χαῖρε*—farewell, lost friend. Their deepest sorrow utters itself in the wail: “salve æternum mihi . . . æternumque vale” (Virgil, *Æn.* xi. 97). Now there is no more striking contrast to this anywhere existing than what is presented when we turn to the grave-inscriptions of the early Christians (*vid.* Dr. Piper, *Evangelischer Kalender*, 1855; *Die Grab-Inschriften der alten Christen*). We at once stand in a new world of thought. The day of the martyrs’ death is described as their birthday into true life. Death appears to them as a friend. Every memorial stone bears the words “in peace;” the ark of Noah—the palm branch of victory, are the ever-recurring symbols. Their burying-places are cemeteries, and the word speaks of rest in sleep and a future awakening from it. The symbol also of two hands clasped together, with the words “zum wiedersehen,” so frequently seen in modern German God’s acres, could never have been graven by heathen hands. We see then that by the gospel, received in faith, in the case of all Gentile converts—

“ Hope rose within them, like a summer’s morn.”

The gospel has revealed to men the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the reunion in heaven of long-divided hearts. The apostle thus exhorts believers to cherish feelings in regard to their

departed friends of a far different kind from those which took gloomy possession of heathen breasts. Believers, indeed, are not to set aside all sorrow. They are not, in a spirit of stoicism, to put it violently away from them. Weeping for the dead is not denied them as a sacred privilege—a kind of chastened joy. The gospel rather turns their tearful gaze to Him who was “the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” as He wept Himself at the grave of His friend Lazarus. It is, His example and our own hearts being witness, in the highest sense right, for it is truly human, to sorrow when the body, which once was the dwelling-place of an unseen but much-loved spirit, has become desolate, and falls a prey to corruption—“a worn-out fetter which the soul has broken and thrown away.” But while all this is true, Christian sorrow is not the same as heathen sorrow. Christ’s people are “as sorrowing, yet alway rejoicing.” The eye of their faith can see “the bright light in the cloud” of even the heaviest earthly trial. They do not refuse to shed tears, but they also do not refuse to dry them at their Saviour’s bidding. He is ever near them, speaking peace to—

“The breaking heart that will not break,”

and turning “the shadow of death into the morning.”

The apostle gives one reason why Christian sorrow in presence of death is to be different from that of the others. It lies in the threefold repetition in this passage of the word “asleep,” as applied to the Christian dead—a figure possibly suggested here by our Lord’s own parable of the ten virgins, the imagery in both passages being the same. The heathen mind, indeed, was not altogether unfamiliar with this repre-

sensation of death. Hesiod, for instance, speaks of the death of men in the golden age (*Works and Days*, 115) thus—

“ θνητῶν δ' ὥς ὕπνου δεδιμνημένοι,”

and this is only one instance out of many which might easily be gathered out of pagan literature. But the image of “death and his brother sleep” (Shelley, “*Consanguineus leti sopor*”) did not mean much in such passages as these. They are rather to be interpreted by a Greek epitaph on one Nicodemus (*vid. Nineteenth Century*, as above)—the dreariest that can be inscribed upon the portals of the tomb—“clad in *wakeless* sleep.” But the word “asleep,” applied to bodily dissolution in Scripture, has become invested with a new and infinitely precious meaning. It is a euphemism of most blessed significance. Those who “sleep in Jesus” are “*somno compositi*”—laid to sleep, lulled into the blissful slumber of Christian death. It is a favourite word on the lips of Him who is the Life (Mark v. 39; John xi. 11, 14). He “in behalf of mankind has taken away the sting of death, and changed its iron band for a thread of silken slumber” (Gladstone, *Homer and the Homeric Age*, ii. 104). Hence, trusting in *His* death,—His laying His life down of Himself,—His people can say, “O Saviour, it is enough that Thou tellest us death is no other than sleep; that which was wont to pass for the cousin of death is now itself!” (Bishop Hall’s *Contemplations*). Now this description of those believers who had died in Thessalonica is all the more striking, all the more comforting, if we suppose, as we may with good reason do, that some, perhaps many of them, had like

Stephen been Christian martyrs. Like him, they may have fallen asleep in the anguish of bodily suffering—amid the taunts and scoffs of their enemies—and outwardly beset by everything which rendered death terrible; yet, even in such a case, it was but a falling asleep for them—a retiring to rest at the close of the day, after its tearful and painful toil—a falling into undisturbed repose—a resting to be followed by a blissful arising to the fulness of the resurrection life. John in Patmos heard a voice—a voice in all probability of a glorified saint—one who had “kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus”—it fell, it falls still, as a new beatitude from the very heights of heaven into the valley of Achor: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”¹

But while a purpose of comfort lies in the repeated use of the image of sleep—a reason why violent, prolonged, and heathenlike demonstrations of grief should be unknown in the Church of Christ, we have not yet drawn near to the special meaning of the passage. The peculiar sorrow of the Thessalonians did not arise from the loss of friends which they had sustained by death. Nor did their sorrow spring from any doubts which they cherished regarding the resurrection of their departed friends. If this had been their point of view, the apostle would have reproved them because of their ignorance and unbelief—he would have

¹ Wordsworth (Knight's edition, vol. iv.) has the lines on Michael Angelo in reply to a passage upon his statue of Night sleeping,—

Come, gentle Sleep, Death's image tho' thou art,
Come share my couch, nor speedily depart;
How sweet thus living without life to lie,
Then without death how sweet it is to die!

reminded them that there *is* a resurrection from the dead, and that they ought to have remembered this—a doctrine as it was which could not possibly have been absent from his previous instruction. But he does not do so. On the contrary, he goes on to unfold to them some aspects of doctrine which were quite new, and could not but be new to them. It is simply inconceivable that a whole Christian congregation could be sorrowing because they thought the dead would not rise again. True, in 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, two false teachers, Hymenæus and Philetus, are branded by name as, “concerning the truth, having erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrowing the faith of some.” True, as we learn from 1 Cor. xv. 12, there were some in Corinth who said, “there is no resurrection of the dead”—men who in the wisdom of this world were staggered at this new doctrine of the gospel,—one that was so entirely alien to the whole spirit of Gentile thought,—and were thus led to identify the resurrection with the spiritual renewal of the soul by the truth, causing it “to burst forth from the sepulchre of the old man” (*vid.* Dr. Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles, ad loc.*). It is therefore quite possible that some such Christian Sadducees may have been existing also in Thessalonica. Yet, none the less, it is utterly inconceivable that a whole Church, and such an one as that of Thessalonica, so conspicuous in Christian attainment, could be in such thick spiritual darkness—a Church which was an ensample to all Macedonia—the very eye of the country—fatally wrong on a fundamental point of Christian doctrine. What then was the particular point—the erroneous view, which the apostle here touches? It was this. It was generally thought in

their midst, that at the Lord's second and glorious advent, the departed saints—the resurrection not having then taken place—would not have a share in the peculiar joys of meeting with Him and greeting Him on His return to earth. They knew quite well, indeed, that all the faithful who had departed by death would have eternal life with Christ Jesus in heaven. But they feared that *one* joy would be withheld from these—the joy of participating in the blessed triumph of Christ's Church when He came to present it spotless to Himself. That joy they thought would only be shared in by the living. Now this error, a very natural one, was, we might almost say, a credit to them. It sprung out of the very closeness and liveliness of their personal relation to the Saviour. We satisfy ourselves easily, too easily, with the hope of a happy death, and the life of glory beyond. But with these believers of the first days it was otherwise; their thoughts closed so completely around the *Person* of Christ, rather than the blessings which He gives, that they laid special stress upon their being part of that happy company, who would say to Him as He approached, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." They grieved that their departed brethren in Christ should be, as they thought, debarred from this privilege. Now to meet, and so remove this mistaken apprehension, the apostle proceeds to partially draw aside the veil that shrouds the future. His previous teaching had perhaps not been sufficiently explicit. At all events, it had been misunderstood. He would speak now with more precision. Thus the Thessalonians' errors have become the occasion of the instruction of the universal Church on some aspects of the doctrine of the second coming. They were not hopelessly to

be sunk in sorrow about their absent friends. If these had been among those on earth who had clung through reproach to the crucified One, they would assuredly not be torn from His fellowship when He came in glory. If they had been among those who saw—recognised in Him, even “in the form of a servant,” a King of infinite majesty, He on His part would not leave them behind in His triumph. They would be at no disadvantage, compared with those who were still alive and waiting with oil in their lamps, when the cry came at last to be heard, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh.” “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” “If,” he says, not implying any element of doubt, but rather assuming the impossibility of doubt,—if we believe, as of course we do, that “Jesus,” the human name of the Saviour, representing Him as the Kinsman-Redeemer, “died,” not here “fell asleep:” His death is in no case spoken of in that way. His death was real, awful—death with its sting, and it has thus made His people’s death a sleep. His death, as the early Fathers love to put it, is “the death of death.” “And rose again,”—His resurrection is the other pillar of the Christian faith. If we believe these two great facts, our belief makes our union with the Saviour, and that union can never be dissolved, and we must believe, as a consequence, that those who have been laid to sleep by Jesus—sleeping the calm and blissful sleep, through dying in the Lord—“will God bring with Him,” that is, with Jesus. In the closest union (σύν) and fellowship with Him will they be brought in His approach. They are not severed from their Lord now; they cannot be severed from Him when

He comes again. In the fulness of its meaning, His words will hold good then, as now, and evermore: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." He will then come "with *all* His saints," not one awanting.

The fifteenth verse is a further unfolding of what immediately precedes. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord." He speaks as one commissioned to announce some special revelation which had been given him—one which the troubled hearts of his converts needed—one which would suffuse their whole lives with the very joy of heaven. He had said before, with special emphasis, "I would not have you to be ignorant." Now, with increasing solemnity, he says, "We say unto you by the word of the Lord." The apostle was not teaching on his own authority, nor was it any doctrine of Rabbinical lore which he was advancing; here he felt that he had a special commission to speak in his Master's name. His authority rested upon His Lord's express revelation. As to the prophets, so to Paul "the word of the Lord came." We need not inquire specially to what the allusion directly is. Whether to any of our Lord's sayings recorded in the Gospels, as, for instance, the parable of the ten virgins, or to some part of His teaching during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension. It is better to leave such inquiries unanswered, as indeed they must be: we have no sure ground on which to proceed. It is enough that it is the word of the Lord which declares "that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep"—shall not go before, so as to gain the advantage over—shall not share in

the joys of the Saviour's advent before the others, or more than the others.

The word "we," however, suggests an important question. Does Paul teach that he himself expected to be alive at Christ's coming — and that therefore that coming was very near at hand? It is very commonly held that the apostle was in error here; more especially since Dr. Arnold (*Christian Life and Character*, p. 490) somewhat rashly and dogmatically declared, "We may safely and reverently say, that St. Paul, in this instance, entertained and expressed a belief which the event did not justify." Now, if he were indeed in error, then the error was a very serious one. It is an error fallen into at the very time when he was declaring that he was speaking "by the word of the Lord." But this is not all. In 2 Thess., an Epistle written not long after this one, some say even a little before it, the apostle expressly warns the Thessalonians against being troubled "as if the day of the Lord was at hand," and explains that that day will not come till the "man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." Besides, in 1 Cor. vi. 14 we read, "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up *us* by His own power;" and in 2 Cor. iv. 14, "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall also raise up *us* also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." It is there implied that Paul assuredly expected that he would be among the dead at Christ's coming. Setting these passages alongside of those in Thessalonians, we find that in regard to any view as to the apostle's personal expectation, they neutralize one another. Besides, if we press the "we," it follows that all the Thessalonian believers addressed would, without exception, be kept alive on earth till Christ

came (*vidl.* Hoffmann *in loc.*). Paul's "we," therefore, as the clauses connected with it show, is to be understood simply as a broad, universal "we," which each age may, or rather must, apply to itself. The doctrine taught is put (as Luthardt, *Die Lehre von den letzten Dingen*, p. 142, has it) in the form of personal interest, not simply the living and the dead, but, we the living, and they, the dead. There is a lesson impressed upon the universal Church in this. The certainty of the coming and the uncertainty of the time are alike presented to view. As Augustine says: "Ergo latet illa dies, ut observentur omnes dies."

LECTURE XVI.

*"Tuba, mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum."*

THOMAS OF CELANO.

*"The Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watched; he blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps
When God descended; and perhaps once more
To sound at general doom."*

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, xi.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—1 THESS. iv. 16–18.

THE apostle draws aside yet more the curtain of futurity. He increases and confirms the comfort which, "by the word of the Lord," he offers to believers, by revealing additional truth about the resurrection day. His words, of course, are to be understood as "verba allegorica." He uses the language of symbol—the only language which can convey to us on earth any conception of things in heaven. The manner of the coming of the Lord, the subsequent resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Him, the joyous meeting of those who "are alive and remain" with their brethren in Christ, the meeting of the one united company with Him in the air, and their final dwelling for ever with Him in glory, in

"Bliss, past man's power to paint it, time's to close,"—

all this is depicted for us here.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven,” not, “He, the Lord,” but He, and no other, He in His own august personal presence,—in that same human body, too, with which He has ascended into heaven. It was announced by angelic lips to the wondering men of Galilee, as they stood on the brow of Mount Olivet, gazing up into heaven, “This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” The word “Himself” therefore would imply that “in quâ carne ascendit in coelum, et in quâ sedit ad dexteram Patris, descensurus est ad iudicium” (Augustin). He will be the same Lord and Master then to His disciples as He was once to the little band of His followers, when the world regarded Him with scorn. And yet, while Himself unchanged, how changed in His surroundings! He will descend from heaven, not again in humiliation to tabernacle with men, but to take His people to be with Himself in heaven. He will come, not emptied of His glory in the feebleness and helplessness of infancy, but with the symbols of regal majesty and divine power. Some of these symbols are specified. There are three accompaniments of His coming. (1) A shout, an authoritative shout, one that indicates command. As commentators generally have pointed out, the word is used of a charioteer’s call to his steed, of a huntsman’s call to his dogs, of the call, by voice or sign, of the boatswain giving time to his rowers. The word further designates the music played to set an army or a fleet in motion. Something of this sense possibly appears here. The angelic host and the company of the spirits of just men made perfect are compared to a vast and splendid army, and He, the Captain of salvation, is described as by His word of command setting it in motion, and it in the alacrity of joyful obedience

thereupon accompanies Him to judgment. Enoch (Jude ver. 14) prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment."

But may we discover what that shout will be? Our Lord Himself possibly has signified it to us in the parable of the ten virgins—that parable which in its imagery so closely resembles this passage. He says, "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Here the shout spoken of by the apostle seems rendered by the Lord Himself into articulate speech. Here we have the very command which once uttered must be obeyed—the command which not only musters the retinue of angels and of glorified saints, but also summons and assembles all men, of every age and race, to meet their God.

(2) The next accompaniment is "the voice of the archangel." Some hold that the shout of command is itself the voice of the archangel, and further that the archangel is none other than the Lord Himself. Lightfoot, for instance (in a sermon on "Michael your prince," Dan. x. 21), says, "That by 'Michael' is meant 'Christ,' this very place evidenceth, in that he is called 'your prince.' For who is the prince of the Church but Christ? And chap. xii. 1, he is called 'the great prince.' And in Rev. xii. mention is made of Michael and the dragon; that is, Christ and Satan. He is called the 'archangel,' Jude ver. 9. And so 1 Thess. iv. 16, 'The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel;' which elsewhere (John v. 25) is expressed, 'shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' He is the archangel in two respects; either as the chief angel or messenger that ever God employed,

or as chief or head of the angels." There is nothing to justify this view. "The Lord Himself" and "the archangel" cannot be identified; the whole structure of the sentence forbids it. Here and in Jude ver. 9, the only other New Testament parallel passage, the word archangel designates rather a leader of the angelic hosts, by whom the Lord will be attended—one of the mightiest of "His mighty angels," pre-eminent in office and authority and rank—"prince of the celestial army." We need not concern ourselves with Jewish speculations regarding these glorious beings. "They are sometimes said to be seven, 'the seven lamps' burning before the throne, and sometimes ten; and in the Jewish writings four are especially named, corresponding to the 'thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers' in Eph. i. 21. The names also of these serving angels have thus been given: Michael and his company stand on the right hand of the throne, and Gabriel similarly on the left, Uriel in front, and Raphael behind, the Shechinah being in the centre" (Eadie). But turning from such mystic speculations to what Scripture teaches, we find at least that angels have been already, and will be yet again, Christ's ministering spirits. They visited the earth in order to foretell and glorify His incarnation, to attend Him after His temptation and after His agony in the garden, and to announce His resurrection and ascension. They are represented, too, as ascending and descending upon the Son of man in the advancement of His cause in the world. As then they are the Saviour's ministers of grace now, it is declared that they are to be His ministers of judgment hereafter. In regard to the *voice* of the archangel here, Scripture gives us no hint. It may be the shout of command caught up by him

from the lips of the Lord Himself and repeated to the gathering hosts.

(3) The last-mentioned accompaniment of our Lord's coming is thus described, "and with the trump of God." We are to understand by this not "tuba Dei, adeoque magna" (Bengel), but more simply and naturally, the trumpet belonging to God, used in His service, —perhaps that which is alluded to in Rev. xi. 15, "the seventh angel sounded." Under the old dispensation there is special prominence assigned to the trumpet as an instrument consecrated to religious uses. By it the congregations were called together for holy meetings, and for the journeyings of the camps. Its notes sounded the alarm of war, and ushered in the beginnings of the months, and of the solemn days, and of the year of jubilee (*vid.* Pusey on Joel ii. 1). Our Lord Himself further tells us that when time shall be no more, He, the Son of man, "shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet," and the purpose thereof, in accordance with its previous uses on earth, will then be "to gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." We cannot tell what reality this symbol may represent, whether or not it be "the crash of worlds," the passing away of the heavens "with a great noise." Thus in Zech. ix. 14, where it is said that "the Lord God shall blow the trumpet," the allusion, as appears from the context, is to *thunder*, which is elsewhere called the voice of God (so Webster and Wilkinson). It is evident, however, that while there may be no direct reference in Paul's Epistles to the teaching of our Lord in the Gospels, his eschatology is "based on a knowledge of at least the substance of the great prophetic discourse recorded in the Gospels" (*vid.* Dr. Plumptre on Matt.

xxiv. 31, in Ellicott's *New Testament Commentary*). This "last trump," as Paul calls it in 1 Cor. xv. 52, will gather up into itself the meanings of all the others. It will call together the rejoicing saints into the heavenly Zion. It will also, like Joshua's trumpets, sounding doom around the walls of Jericho, be the signal of dismay to the city of destruction and its children. It will be a signal of weal or of woe, according to the character of those who hear. Those, then, who have listened to the silver trumpet of the gospel on earth, can say:—

"Oh, when judgment-trumpet clear
Awakes me from the grave,
Still in its echoes may I hear
'Tis Christ, He comes to save."—*Lyra Apostolica*.

Thus that day will be stripped of its terrors. It will be a day of gladness.

It is instructive to notice that the giving of the law on Mount Sinai has evidently been ordained to prefigure the circumstances of the second advent of the Divine Lawgiver and Fulfiller of the law, and of the last judgment. If we compare Ex. xix. 16-20, we shall find the same prominent elements common to both. The thick cloud, the flaming fire (2 Thess. i. 8), the voice of the trumpet, exceeding loud, sounding long, and waxing louder and louder, and "the ministry of angels" (Gal. iii. 19). These pertain to both. We are thus reminded of the close—the essential, inseparable connection existing between law and judgment. Those therefore who, like the awestruck Israelitish camp, tremble in presence of God's law now, will not be found trembling before His frown at the great day of assize. The description passes on to the resurrection and change of Christ's people at His coming.

Power, omnipotent power, is to go forth from the Lord. In obedience to that power, and in virtue of it, "the dead in Christ shall rise first." Their bodies, which rest in

"The wide-winding caverns of the peopled tomb,"

shall be raised up. This is the "first" act in the mighty drama. The emphasis rests upon the word "first." The word is designed by the apostle to bring comfort to the Thessalonian mourners. Their departed friends, so far from being at a disadvantage in relation to the Saviour's advent, were to occupy a position of privilege. They were "first" to rise! Then, as speedily, immediately following upon the resurrection of those who are asleep, "we which are alive and remain," that is, those who are not departed from the body, but are the living saints on earth when the Lord comes, "shall be caught up." There is nothing said about *their* previous change. It has been often asked, must not these also taste of death? Are we not told that "it is appointed unto *all* men once to die"? Our passage is silent on this point. But Paul elsewhere fills up the gap: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall *not* all sleep, but we shall all be *changed*." It would appear therefore that those Christians who are living in these latter days on earth will not be unclothed of their bodies, but will rather at once be clothed upon with immortality. Their change will be a kind of death and resurrection in one. Their body of this flesh will be transformed, transfigured, into a spiritual body—a body made meet for the kingdom of heaven. Thus changed, these "shall be caught up together with them," that is, along with and at the same time as the others, in one united and

rejoicing company. This assurance was fitted to allay all the disquietude in the Thessalonian Church. The living and the dead are declared to be alike as to future privilege. Those who live in Christ cherish a good hope. Those who die in Christ can say, "My flesh shall rest in hope." The same lot awaits both.

But the apostle does not content himself with simply removing his friends' fears; he proceeds to confirm their hopes. He goes on to speak of the joyful meeting appointed to take place between the Lord and both classes of His people at His coming. He will come to meet them. "He shall descend from heaven," and by His power they shall ascend to meet Him. They "shall be caught up" with a quick and resistless rapture, as the word implies—rising from the troubled and imperfect earth—changed and sublimated, as the blossom of the fabled Indian tree, transformed into a bird, flies upwards towards heaven (*vid.* Schelling's *Clara*, p. 91). It is added "in the clouds,"—"rapt in a balmy cloud" (Milton),—not *into* the clouds, not in clusters, or as a cloud for multitude, but as if in a triumphal chariot ("Tanquam in curru triumphali," Grotius), on which they will be upborne. There is something to be learned from the frequent reference to clouds in connection with the coming of the Son of man. There is, perhaps, nothing in all nature more beautiful or more awful, and, whether the one or the other, more mysterious than the clouds. Ruskin, who has discoursed so much and with such surpassing eloquence on cloud scenery, has said (*Modern Painters*, v. p. 145), "Few of us, perhaps, have thought, in watching the career of the rain-cloud across our own mossy hills, or listening to the murmur of the springs amidst the mountain quietness, that the chief masters of the

human imagination owed, and confessed that they owed, the force of their noblest thoughts, not to the flowers of the valley, nor the majesty of the hill, but to the flying cloud." So, similarly, it has been said (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*), "Being the least substantial of all visible forms, undefined in shape and unrestrained in position, the cloud is the one of material things which suggests most easily spiritual being. Hence it is, so to speak, the recognised machinery by which supernatural appearances are introduced, or the veil between things visible and invisible; but more especially, a mysterious and supernatural cloud is the symbolical presence itself." In accordance with such thoughts, the clouds would probably mean not the attending angels "having at the distance the appearance of clouds which attend the sun;" still less would they mystically signify "His saints, formed of the waters of baptism and the breath of the Spirit," or "the clouds of ministering spirits, prophets, apostles, and saints, who make manifest His comings and goings" (*vid.* Isaac Williams, *Devotional Commentary on the Gosp. Narr.*, The Holy Week, p. 296). Nor do the clouds represent a veiling of the whole awful transaction (Riggenbach). They simply supply an imagery which lends grandeur, mystery, awe to that event, which in itself is awful beyond all human language and thought.

The next clause is—"to meet the Lord in the air." We very naturally place alongside of this description the ascension of Elijah, "Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven;" or more naturally still, the Saviour's own ascension, when He was parted from His disciples, and a cloud received Him out of their

sight. In this, as in all else, He has gone before His people, and pointed out for them the way. It is, however, noticeable that the rapture, the assumption of Elijah, is essentially different from that of the Saviour. In the prophet's case there is the symbol of the purifying fire, whereby the dross of earth and sin are purged away. In the ascension of Him who was the Friend of sinners, yet separate from sin, that element is wanting. It could have no meaning there: His was a sinless humanity. "In the air"—that is, not the atmosphere but indefinite space, as opposed to the earth. It was a well-known fancy of the ancient heathen mythology that the milky-way, so often seen above us in the calm of the starlit evening, in "the beauty and the fearfulness of night," is the path trod by the immortals to the palace or judgment-hall of the Supreme King. That fable is, like so many others, but a broken and distorted reflection of the truth which the apostle, "by the word of the Lord," reveals. What *it* fancied, apostolic truth declares—a pathway in the skies, along which the saints, clothed with immortality, are yet to pass to meet their Lord, that so they may enter with Him into the palace of fadeless splendour—the house of many mansions—which He is even now preparing for all who love His appearing. But in the severe reticence of the apostle's language there stands out before us not the grandeur, not even the solemnity of the event, but chiefly the joy and gladness which belong to it—it is the *meeting with the Lord*—the going forth with loving loyalty to greet Him in His advent as King and Lord of all.

Hitherto the prophetic description is minute, specific in its details. But now in the last clause it is otherwise. The apostle's immediate purpose was to show

that no disadvantage belonged to those who had fallen asleep in Jesus. This purpose was served in what he had been enabled to disclose. Hence he now breaks off the description, or rather he gathers up the rest of it in the short yet all-embracing clause, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"And so," that is to say, such a change and gathering together, and meeting with Him having taken place, "we," that is, both classes—those who "are alive and remain," and those who "are asleep"—"shall be ever with the Lord." Less than this can never satisfy Christ's saints; more than this they cannot desire or conceive. There are implied in being ever with Him perfect security, sinlessness, happiness, and glory. The question what is the end to be, is one that slumbers deep in every believer's breast. Ever and anon with anxiety and wonder an answer to it is sought. But while the wings of human life are "plumed with the feathers of death," in the case of the Christian they are plumed rather with the hope of immortality of bliss. The saints of every age, although knowing only in part, are satisfied meanwhile to obey the apostolic command given to those of the first age, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The thought of being with the Lord—that heavenly home-sickness—

"Lies like a flower upon the heart,
And draws around it other thoughts, like bees
For multitude and thirst of sweetness."

In regard to this whole section, vv. 16-18, it is necessary to bear in mind that it treats of that which in the nature of things can be set forth only partially, and that too only in language of figure. Dean Alford, indeed, has penned a very strongly-worded caution

against this view. He speaks of "literal details, strict matter of fact." He says, "Either these details must be received by us as matter of practical expectation, or we must set aside the apostle as one divinely empowered to teach the Church." So he argues against Jowett. Yet surely what Jowett says is only what the most believing student of the word must be willing to accept: "Where the things of which we are speaking are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, which can only be expressed in figures of speech and types of the Old Testament, it is vain to attempt to define exactly the meaning of particular words, or to fill up the figures by which the general meaning is conveyed. Such an attempt is like painting a picture of the scenes in the Apocalypse, which, the moment they are brought together, are seen to have a prophetic and symbolical meaning, not an artistic unity." In our present state we cannot expect more—more, indeed, would be actually less, because it would be unintelligible. We can only say, as we look to the future—

"I thirst for truth,
But shall not drink it till I reach the source."

It is worth while appending to the exposition of this section Bishop Alexander's note on ver. 16, "Of all the solemn associations connected with the verse, few can surpass the following, recorded in many of the foreign papers of the day: At the earthquake of Manilla, the cathedral fell upon the clergy and congregation. The mass of ruin overhead and around the doomed assemblage was kept for a time from crushing down upon them by some peculiarity of construction. Those outside were able to hear what was going on in the church,

without the slightest possibility of clearing away the ruins, or of aiding those within, upon whom the building must evidently fall before long. A low, deep, bass voice, doubtless that of the priest officiating, was heard uttering the words, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' As this sentence came forth, the multitude burst into a passion of tears, which was soon choked. For some deep groans issued from within, apparently wrung from the speaker by intense pain, and then the same voice spoke in a calm and even tone, as if addressing a congregation, and all heard the words, 'The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.'" An incident of this kind shows us how, in every age of the Church's history, and in circumstances of the most awful extremity, the comfort which the apostle offers to the Thessalonians has in no way lost its power.

LECTURE XVII.

*"Is this a time to steep
Thy brains in wasteful slumbers? Up, and rouse
Thy leaden spirit: is this a time to sleep?"*

QUARLES, *Emblems*.

*"Es ist nothwendig, dass wir stets bewaffnet wider unsere
Feinde, die Sünde, wie Hannibal wider den Scipio, zu
Feld liegen, und allen Schlaf aus den Augen treiben.
Denn wenn der Mensch unterliegt, und seine Feinde, die
Laster, die Oberhand nehmen, ach so verdirbt die Seele!"*

ABRAHAM A SANCTA CLARA, *Wintergrün*.

*"O blessed Hope, sole boon of man: whereby, on his strait
prison walls, are painted beautiful far-stretching land-
scapes; and into the night of very Death is shed holiest
dawn! Thou art to all an indefeasible possession in
this God's-world; to the wise a sacred Constantine's-
banner, written on the Eternal skies; under which they
SHALL conquer, for the battle itself is victory."*

CARLYLE, *French Revolution*.

"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation."—1 THESS. v. 1-8.

THE apostle having disclosed much in the foregoing verses about the Lord's second coming, and the respective shares in its glory which are to fall to those of His people who are then asleep, and those of them who are then alive, and remain, and having

shown that the one class will not be more highly favoured than the other, proceeds now to declare to his readers that, having such assured knowledge, they have enough. It is not for them in a spirit of mere curiosity to pry into "the times and seasons" when these things shall be. "Times and seasons"—these words appear frequently together, but the combination in the New Testament is peculiar to the writings of Luke and Paul. How are they to be distinguished? The words stand related to one another much in the same way as the words space and place. The one is time in and by itself conceived. The other is definite periods of time—critical epochs of time. They are well rendered sections of time and points of time, much better than "day and hour." In the present phrase they appear invariably in the plural; and this is not without its significance. The apostle sets before us a connected series of events. Under no delusion himself as to the Lord's coming during his own generation, Paul rather looks down through the long dim vista of coming years. He thinks of "the times and the seasons." He knew not, indeed, what these were. But we, perhaps, to a certain extent do. Looking back on the past, we can mark some of these epochs which have come and gone—for instance, and very pre-eminently, the destruction of Jerusalem—next, the recognition of the religion of Christ by the Roman Empire—the conversion of the Germanic tribes—the Crusades—the Reformation,—possibly the recent assumption of infallibility by the Bishop of Rome, and it may be that we can anticipate yet another epoch—the appearance of some future Roman Pontiff, who will claim not merely the one divine attribute of infallibility, but will kythe as Antichrist, the man

of sin, in claiming to be actually identified with Jesus Christ—the last incarnation (*vid.* Mason in Ellicott's *N. T. Com. for English Readers*, iii. p. 170). This at all events we know, when we think of the various stages in the history of Christ's kingdom, and notice how they are links in the one chain, that the end of them all is the second advent of the Lord. More than this we cannot and need not know. The way of the Eternal God "as mirrored in this world of time" is dark, for "God's instant men call years." It is hidden from us, in this "hour-girt life" of earth, which hour is to be the last, that the voice may be always heard by the ear of faith—that voice which echoes "through the long-resounding corridors of time," "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Archer Butler has well said (sermon on "The practical uses of the uncertainty of Christ's Coming"), "Of this future coming,—of this true advent season of eternity,—though much is known, much too is hidden. There are secrets the Divine Bridegroom whispers not; that the 'Spirit and the Bride' may still say, 'Come.' Between the Church and the Church's Head there still subsists, even in this intimate union, a mysterious separation; and on the period of that separation a holy reserve. It has already lasted for ages, and we cannot dare to predict at what epoch it is to close. The veil that hangs before the celestial sanctuary is still undrawn; and it is vain for us to 'marvel,' as of old the expectants of Zacharias, that the High Priest of our profession 'tarrieth so long in the temple.' He has willed it that, certain of His eventual arrival, we should remain in uncertainty as to its destined moment. 'The times and the seasons which the

Father hath put in His own power,' He would have us desire, and expect and conjecture, but not dare to define." This mingling of ignorance and knowledge on the part of Christ's people is best suited to keep alive in their breasts that hope whose breathed utterance ever is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." About "the times and the seasons," the apostle says, "Ye have no need that I write unto you," or rather, "to be written unto." There was no occasion for their eagerly and anxiously inquiring about the exact time, "for yourselves," that is, not the Thessalonian brethren, as opposed to Paul himself and his companions, but the Thessalonians and all believers, as opposed to "the rest" (chap. iv. 13), the children of the night and of darkness, "know perfectly," that is, accurately, exactly, by means, probably, of the apostle's previous oral instruction, and also by means of the written Gospel of Luke, which, as we have seen, may have been placed shortly before this time in their hands—that Gospel which preserves for us much of our Lord's own teaching on this very doctrine of the last things. They had accurate knowledge of this, "that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night,"—knowledge, in other words, that the time cannot be known—knowledge of men's absolute ignorance on the point. The day of the Lord means undoubtedly the day of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, involving in it also the idea of coming judgment. It is the day, not of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, nor of each individual's death,—though these are not excluded,—but of the coming of the Lord at the end of the days. While the time of His approach is declared to be hidden, the mode—the manner of it is revealed. "As a thief:" here we have a very

striking comparison—one which to all appearance had passed into a well-recognised formula, and yet one which, we may hold, no Christian would have dared to use, had it not itself been first suggested and hallowed by Christ's own lips. And so we find it first of all in His own parable (Matt. xxiv. 43 and Luke xii. 39, 40); next we find it caught up and used by His disciple and apostle, Peter (2 Pet. iii. 10), "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Then we find it adopted by Paul; and last of all we hear the same Saviour, but now risen and ascended and glorified, speaking from His throne to the angel of the Church of Sardis, "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. iii. 3); or, more to the point still (Rev. xvi. 15), "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth." The words are therefore a regular and familiar scriptural simile—one which had taken firm hold of the mind and heart of the Apostolic Church. They had crystallized into the formula by which the doctrine of the second coming was set forth. What is the truth to be taken out of it? This first, that His coming will be stealthy, under cover, as it were, of darkness, and therefore unexpected. He will come when the children of the night and of darkness—the dreamers (Jude ver. 8)—do not, in the slumber of carnal security, even momentarily think of His approach. But surely there is more than this implied in the simile of the thief. If this were all, we should be entitled to say, that there is not much of aptness, and still less of dignity, in it. But this further truth seems to be suggested, that as the thief comes not only unexpectedly, but also to steal, so the day of the Lord

comes to take away by force the so-called goods—the possessions of the worldling. The children of night have their most valued substance snatched from them. They are robbed—they are robbed of their soul. The robber comes to kill and destroy. This seems borne out by the parallel already quoted, Rev. xvi. 15, “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and *keepeth his garments*, lest he walk *naked*, and they see his shame.” Vigilance is needed that the garments may be kept,—not torn from him,—that he may not be found robbed of the robe of the Redeemer’s righteousness, but clothed therewith, and so accepted at last.

The idea is further expanded in the words which follow: “For when they shall say, Peace and safety”—when the children of this world cherish the feeling of comfort and security within their breasts, and dread no interference with their safety from without—when they are neither looking nor preparing for the crisis, then “sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child” (*αἰφνίδιος* is used only in one other passage in the New Testament of Christ’s coming, and that is in the Gospel of Luke xxi. 34; perhaps a slight support of the view that the Thessalonians possessed that Gospel). This sudden destruction is vividly represented as *standing over* those who are not thinking of its approach, and it is described by a not uncommon Oriental comparison (*vid.* Hos. xiii. 13, Pusey thereon) as violent, and irresistible as well as sudden. “And they shall not escape,” that is, the travail—the sudden destruction. This they shall in nowise (*οὐ μὴ*) be able to avoid. Thus in words and illustrations of unusual power and solemnity is depicted to us the surprise of the

world when "that day" comes, and the fearful loss which it brings to those who look not for it.

There is a striking picture in the Wisdom of Solomon (ii. 1-9) of those who falsely say, "Peace and safety." They exclaim, "Let us enjoy the good things that are present; and let us speedily use the creatures, like as in youth, let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered; let us leave tokens of joyfulness in every place; for this is our portion, and our lot is in this." Such is a true picture of those whose so-called peace looks on Christ Jesus as an enemy, and springs from ignoring Him, His invitations, and His warnings, and whose so-called safety lies not in the removal of danger, but in indifference towards it. All such there await sudden confusion, dismay, destruction. To Christians themselves there will be the suddenness, but nothing more—not the destruction. "This present state of things, 'the present distress,' as St. Paul calls it, is ever *close upon* the next world, and resolves itself into it. As when a man is given over, he may die any moment, yet lingers; as an implement of war may any moment explode, and must at some time; as we listen for a clock to strike, and at length it surprises us; as a crumbling arch hangs, we know not how, and is not safe to pass under,—so creeps on this feeble weary world, and one day, before we know where we are, it will end" (Newman, sermon, "Waiting for Christ," vol. vi. p. 241).

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness," as the others are, "that that day should overtake *you* as a thief." The apostle thus retracts what he has just

been saying, so far as it applies to his brethren in Christ Jesus. Light and darkness, especially as used by our Lord Himself and by His beloved disciple John, are words very commonly employed in Scripture to represent opposite moral states. The realm of natural darkness is used here as a natural and fitting symbol of a spiritual state—the state of a soul away from God as He has revealed Himself in Christ—“*Statum ignorantiae et vitii*” (Turretin), — blindness of understanding and heart and will. There is implied in it *ignorance of God*: that is a walking in darkness;—*wickedness*: Christ says, “Men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; for every one that doeth evil hateth the light;”—*misery*: we read of times of sorrow described as days of darkness. There was such thick darkness resting over Thessalonica—a darkness which was the shadow of death. But the little Christian community in its midst was a bright point—an ever-expanding centre of light. Joyfully does the apostle acknowledge this, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” He recognises no exceptions, no inner distinctions, among the members of the Church; all stand alike so far as grace, privileges, and duties are concerned. They are all declared to be children (a Hebræism) of the light—claiming it, as it were, as their parent, standing in the relation of kinship to it. To them darkness is alien and repulsive. Theirs is a state of *knowledge*; they are “enlightened,” having turned the eye of their heart to Him who is the Light of the world;—of *holiness*, as God is clothed with light as with a garment, so are His people clothed even now with the white robe;—of *happiness*, “Joy

cometh in the morning ;"—of *future glory*, when in God's light they shall see light clearly. Their path—the path of the just—is "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." This, then, being the state of Christ's people, it cannot be that that day should overtake them as a thief; the day of the Lord, loved and longed for, can never actually come upon them as something unwelcome—disliked, dreaded. The very statement of their character and privilege is thus on the part of the apostle an earnest appeal addressed to them. Not for them "will the day of the Lord be darkness," "therefore let us not sleep as do others"—just as the rest do. It is in accordance with the character and condition of the children of the night, that they "sleep in the night." Jude speaks of them as "dreamers," and the prophet calls sin "a dream of a night-vision." The sinner is, as it were, in an unreal state.

"Reason retires

Into her private cell when nature rests."

—*Par. Lost*, v. 112.

So when the soul sleeps, reason ceases to guide and to restrain. It is under the sway of corrupt imaginations. The sinner further is in a state of partial insensibility, hearing not the threatening of God's law, nor the invitation of His grace. But the servants of Christ are not in such a state of spiritual torpor and death. They are to sustain their character as the children of the day by being awake and watchful—watchful over self—watchful against Satan—watchful for their Lord and Master. While they look within and around, they are to look forward, so that they may catch the first glimpse of the purple dawn. But the apostle adds,

“and be sober.” Sobriety is here associated, as it is by Peter, with vigilance. Paul says, “They that be drunken are drunken in the night.” The men of this world, being children of the night, are simply acting out their proper character when they surrender themselves to the intoxication of pleasure and power and pride—every form of self-gratification. They are thus asleep, and consequently insensible to duty as well as to danger. They say, “My Lord delayeth His coming, and begin to beat their fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.” But the children of the day, the servants of the Lord, subject themselves to self-restraint. They do as Paul did, who said, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest I should be a castaway.” They cannot wilfully dishonour their Lord and endanger their own safety by any form of sinful self-indulgence. They are temperate, self-restrained in all things; sober in the use of this world’s blessings—in the hold they have of earthly things; sober in their bearing of this world’s sorrows—not grieving beyond measure over losses or bereavements, knowing that by so doing they would be unnerved for right exertion in the Master’s cause; sober even in their religious enthusiasm—earnest and active indeed, but never fanciful and fanatical. This was one of the dangers besetting the Thessalonian Church, and liable to beset every one in connection with the doctrine of the Lord’s coming. They were therefore to be tranquil and peaceful, not “walking disorderly,” but studying to be quiet, and to do each one his own work. They were to give heed to the exhortation, “Let your *moderation* be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”

But the apostle adds, “Let us, who are of the day,

be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." The figure is still kept up and carried forward. Those who are of the day are clothed. They are not like others, unclad and asleep. They are awake in readiness; and their attire corresponds with their attitude of watching, lest they should be surprised by the enemy. Vigilance alone cannot avail. Sobriety alone is not enough. There must be a putting on of "the whole armour of God." They are the children of light, and this armour of theirs is appropriately called in Scripture "the armour of light." As to its nature, it is also designated "the armour of righteousness." This is one of Paul's favourite similes, and we have it most fully wrought out in Eph. vi. It is elsewhere spoken of as a putting on of the new man—the putting on of Christ—the robe of His righteousness; that garment which is white and glistening with the radiance of heaven even now, and which grows in purity till it becomes the white robe worn by the ransomed above. But it is noticeable here that believers are represented not as going forth to conquer, not in their aggressive continuous conflict with evil, but rather as standing on the defensive, ready to meet a sudden and unexpected attack. Hence reference is made only to that part of the panoply of heaven which is needed for protection—defensive armour alone. This is the three leading Christian graces—faith, love, and hope. These are "the weapons of our warfare" in the matter of defence. Every arrow of assault falls from off these as from enchanted armour. The believer's faith and love, His trust in God's goodness and guidance, his love to God and to men, these form for him a breastplate—a cuirass—"stronger than triple steel." His heart

cannot be pierced through by the fire-tipped darts of the enemy, so long as he is encased in mail of faith and love, and wears "for an helmet the hope of salvation;" the headpiece is the hope of deliverance, final and full, when the Lord cometh to reward His servants according as their works shall be. This hope is called the helmet, "as borne in front and on high, the most prominent and conspicuous piece of armour, and most of all the object of observation and attack. Our 'hope of salvation' bears with it our badge of service, our distinction of character, our challenge to the world" (Webster and Wilkinson), and we may also say, our pledge of victory. He who has his head thus "covered in the day of battle" will at last have his head crowned in the day of triumph.

To those who are thus watchful, sober, armed, the Saviour's own promise will at length be fulfilled when He comes in His glory, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you." The realization of that day, however distant, may be near. At least we can say that the progress of the gospel is "as the morning spread upon the mountains;" and the inquiry is eagerly made, in the words of the burden of Dumah—the inquiry from the land of silence—"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" How much of it is gone; how much still remains? The only answer as yet audible is one of mingled comfort and warning—one of weal or woe, according to our respective states, according as we are of the light or of the darkness—"The morning cometh, but also the night." The believer's attitude in this mingled certainty and uncertainty is ever that of waiting for that

"Dim hour, that sleeps on pillowing clouds afar."

LECTURE XVIII.

"This world is like a 'Prosдора' to the next; 'Prepare thyself in the hall, that thou mayest be admitted into the palace,' or, 'This world is like a roadside inn, but the world to come is like the real home.'"—DEUTSCH, *The Talmud*.

"Die Seele ist nicht, wo sie ist, sondern wo sie liebt, und das wahrste Heimweh ist wohl das nach dem andern Leben."
—SCHELLING, *Clara*.

*"And on thy brow there sits eternally
A look of deep yet somewhat anxious bliss,
With a wild light that nestles in thine eye,
As though its home were not a world like this."*
FAER, *Hope*.

"For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do. But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all."—1 THESS. v. 9-15.

THE apostle, passing on from the contemplation of "the hope of salvation" as the helmet of the believer, while he stands sentinel-like, waiting for his Lord's coming, and watchful against all assaults and surprises of the enemy, assigns the reason why that helmet may be of right assumed. "For," ver. 9, the particle is confirmatory, not of the duty of watchfulness, but of the duty of hopefulness—"God hath not appointed us

to wrath." In this clause there lies a negative description of the believer's future lot. While there are those who are designated "the children of wrath," men of whom it may be said that the shadow of God's wrath is already falling upon them, in warning premonition of judgment to come, those who "wait for His Son from heaven" are in character and conduct and destiny "the children of light." They are animated by different principles, traversing a different path, and nearing a different end. They are not of "them which perish," but of "them which are saved." God has appointed them to obtain salvation. The word "appointed" (*ἔθετο*) marks out something fixed and settled, and the middle form of the verb implies that He who has so fixed has an aim, a purpose of His own in view. There is thus a reference to the counsels of the Most High (at what time in their relation to man we need not inquire), whereby He has destined, redeemed, and separated (*destinavit, redemit, segregavit ab infidelibus*, Corn. a Lapide) His people for Himself. This appointment has as its design and end the obtaining of salvation. The mystery and consequent perplexity which the word "appointed" suggests are so far lightened or counterbalanced by the word "obtain." It implies acquisition by personal effort—a making of a thing one's own (1 Tim. iii. 13; Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 14; Heb. x. 39). Thus freewill and predestination poise one another. Dr. Dodds (*in loc. Popular Commentary on N. T.*) well says, "The truest parallel to the expression 'appointed' is that of Peter (1 Pet. ii. 8) where he speaks of the disobedience of the rejecters of Christ, and adds, 'whereunto also they were appointed,' set apart, as it were, in the purpose of God to this end. This end was also the eager choice of their own will;

though how these two determining motives both find room we cannot tell." This, however, we must firmly hold, that even those who stand "on the incline, earth's edge, that's next to hell," may yet be "appointed to obtain salvation." The obtaining further implies that salvation is regarded in the aspect of a future blessing,—the new life, not in its beginnings, not in its progress, but in its completion—the deliverance which pertains to "the kingdom and glory."

But the idea of salvation, strictly and in itself, gives only a negative description of the future of Christ's people. It simply declares what is already stated, that they are "not appointed to wrath." They are *delivered* from that condemnation. Hence the affirmative clause which follows, "that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." So far from being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power," they are "to live." Salvation, future and final, is life—that which alone is worthy of the name of life—that which is opposed to death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. It cannot be otherwise, for it is life with Christ Jesus. The word "with" is a strong one; it expresses conjunction, innermost union,—the closest fellowship with the Saviour, the immediate and constant enjoyment of His gracious presence. Even on earth the believer's life is a life with Him. Its first breathings are from Him; it is ceaselessly upheld by Him; to Him alone it is consecrated. Hence its completion and crown consist in being hereafter ever with Him. But even this is not all; when we transfer the word "together" to its proper place in the sentence, we further learn that in living with Him, His people are also to live with one another. They are to be one

company in Him their only King. The apostle says "that, whether we wake or sleep, we *together* should live with Him." Waking and sleeping are not to be taken in the ethical sense, as signifying alive to spiritual realities on the one hand, and sunk in the sullen slumber of sin on the other. Nor are they to be understood literally, as suggesting that the advent may be either in the daytime, or, as the early Church imagined, in the darkest watches of the night. Unquestionably they mean simply sleeping the sleep of death, and still living upon earth, awake to the duties of life, with the further element of *watching* for the coming of the Lord. To whichever of these classes believers may belong at "that day," they are all to be alike in the privileges and joys which pertain to it. "Together" they are to live with Him.

But while this section speaks of salvation, and of that in which it consists, it has imbedded in it the clause, "By our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us." Its paramount importance must not be overlooked. While the other clauses teach us to look forward, this directs us to look backward. And we must ever in our religious experience do both.

"Past and future are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great spirit of human knowledge."

These lines of Wordsworth have a deeper meaning when applied to spiritual things.

We cannot look forward, reading our "title clear to mansions in the skies," without looking to the past. The Christian, as he contemplates the future of bliss, remembers his Saviour's past of woe. Deliverance comes from Him who was "*delivered* for our offences." Life together with Him is ours, because He *died* for us.

“By our Lord Jesus Christ” is to be connected not with “appointed,” but with “obtain.” The salvation which His people make their own is one that has been wrought out, purchased for them by Him. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Nor is this all. The apostle adds “who died.” Indeed, Christ’s death is in this passage more closely connected with His people’s resurrection-life than perhaps anywhere else. His teaching, His living, are here lost sight of in the central thought of His death. Still further we read “who died *for us*”—on our behalf, for our interests, that so we might escape the coming wrath, and enter into the final bliss. Christ Jesus is the Saviour by His death, and that death was for those who are dead in trespasses and in sins. They who from the heart call Him “*our* Lord Jesus Christ” are delivered from the wrath to come.

Such, then, is the outlook into the future opened up to Christian hope, when Christian faith turns to Him who died. Those who are His, while they may be scorned and ridiculed as dreamers by those who believe only in so far as they see, yet, like Columbus amid similar unbelief, steer onwards in full assured confidence to the land unseen—the haven of rest. Cherishing “one faith against a whole earth’s unbelief, one soul against the flesh of all mankind,” they labour and they wait.

This passage, vv. 9-10, has its interest and value as showing us that the earliest and the latest of the Pauline Epistles are all at one in regard to the central doctrines of salvation through Christ. It is no uncommon thing to find it asserted that the apostle in his writings of later date has advanced far from the vague and unformed views of his earlier Epistles. There

is nothing in support of such a supposition. In this passage we have wrapped up in few words indeed, but none the less really contained in them, his one uniform declaration of salvation through Christ, and His atoning death.

“Wherefore”—seeing that such a future, such an inheritance of bliss is in store—“comfort yourselves together,” by lovingly meditating upon it, by reminding one another of it, by helping one another in preparing for it—and so “edify one another.” The latter word means to instruct, build up. An illustration lies in it—one which the apostle more than once employs. For instance, in writing to the Corinthians, whose city was renowned for the splendour of its public buildings, he appropriately declares, “ye are God’s building.” Christians are represented as built upon Christ Jesus, the only sure foundation, and in their spiritual progress as growing “to a holy temple in the Lord.” The metaphor is used also by Peter (1 Pet. ii. 5), and implied, though not worked out, in the words of Jude, “*building up* yourselves on your most holy faith.” Their work is to rear a fabric, firm and solid, not a tent pitched one day and struck the next, but a structure enduring unto everlasting life. The idea of progress too, as well as of stability, is implied. One stage of this spiritual masonry rises upon another. Ceaselessly is the work carried on, till at length the perfection of beauty be attained, when toil being past, the “work shall abide.” Our Lord Himself has consecrated this metaphor by His own use of it. In His inaugural Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 24–27) He has set before us the “*ruinosa ædificatio*” (Calvin on 1 Cor. viii. 10) of the foolish man, and the safe and enduring work of the wise master-builder whose house is “founded

upon a rock." Here, then, is work assigned to Christ's people, and diligence is required of them in it, for, as the wise man has said (Eccles. x. 18), "by much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." But in the present passage each believer is represented not as a building, a temple complete in itself, but rather as part of the one building—the Church of God. Each man is to edify not merely himself, but every one his neighbour. As a Christian community—as a structure, one stone of which rests upon the other—they are bound together in love; and as Paul elsewhere says, "Charity (love) edifieth." It is "the *bond* of perfectness." The clause is added, "even as also ye do." Lest the exhortation might appear to his friends to have some slight tinge of reproof in it, the apostle closes it with words of praise, and this praise—this grateful, hearty recognition of their Christian conduct,—is a further appeal to them yet more to abound in this good work.

And now, in accordance with his usual practice, the apostle draws his Epistle to a fitting close by a series of general but not miscellaneous directions,—exhortations as to details of conduct, suggested probably by the knowledge he had of certain defects in the Thessalonian community. The relation in which believers as a whole are to stand to the officials of the Church is first of all alluded to. These office-bearers are described by three participles, descriptive of their work. (*a*) "Them which labour among you." The word is frequently used of apostolic and ministerial toil (Rom. xvi. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 10; Gal. iv. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 10). The service, with the duties and responsibilities of which they are clothed, is a laborious service. It

demands painful and exhausting toil. In all its parts it needs exertion, and that exertion brings suffering and pain. The next clause is (*b*) “and are over you in the Lord.” The elders of the Church are portrayed in the aspect of their official dignity. As overseers, they bear rule “in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God.” They are at the head of the church in the matter of taking charge of its affairs, and guiding and sustaining in efficiency its various departments of work. The last descriptive clause is (*c*) “and admonish you” — train you by word of encouragement or remonstrance or reproof, so that you may walk in the way of the Lord. By these three clauses the work of Christ’s ministering servants is described. In its relation to themselves it is toil—in its relation to the Church it is responsibility—in its relation to the hearts and lives of men it is admonition and direction. Those, therefore, to whom this office, in any of its functions, belongs, are to be acknowledged. The apostle says, “We beseech you, brethren, to know them” (ἐπιγινώσκειν, 1 Cor. xvi. 18). They are to be distinguished from all false teachers, recognised as ministers of Christ, and so approved and prized. They are to be sustained by willing support, hearty sympathy, and earnest prayer. This obligation resting upon believers in regard to their spiritual teachers is yet more fully enforced, “and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” Their work, in its very nature, commends them to the heartfelt regard of all who love Christ. It does so, first of all, because of its difficulty. Trials, discouragements, sorrows pertain to it. It does so, further, because of its importance. “Est autem opus hoc ædificatio ecclesiæ, æterna animarum salus, mundi reparatio, denique

regnum Dei et Christi. Hujus operis inæstimabilis est excellentia ac dignitas ; ergo quos tantæ rei ministros facit Deus, nobis eximios esse oportet" (Calvin). It does so, last of all, because of its dignity and responsibility. It is not their work, but Christ's. They are ambassadors for Him. They are fellow-labourers with God. "They watch for souls as they that must give account."

The apostle adds, "And be at peace among yourselves." He thus in effect says to his Thessalonian friends that they cannot act rightly towards Christ's office-bearers in the Church unless they also act rightly towards one another. They are therefore to cherish Christian regard for one another. "We, being many, are one body in Christ ; and every one members one of another." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." There can be no edifying one another (ver. 11) unless there be this peace, the peace of God ruling in their hearts. In a truly prosperous Christian community there reigns no spirit of contention,—there exists even no so-called "*rerum concordia discors*,"—but rather that blissful harmony of thought and feeling and action which is the evidence of the indwelling Spirit, and a pledge of the peace of heaven. Christ's people alone are in the essential meaning of the word "peacemakers." The disposition which follows peace with all men is always the outcome of faith in Him who has "made peace through the blood of His cross." It is only when a man has the consciousness of a new relationship of peace with God that all the discords within his own breast become silenced, and he is enabled to manifest his own inward peace in outward acts of peace toward his brother. Knowing that

“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints,” His people seek “the bond of peace,” as that which guards and preserves the unity of the Spirit. Beholding the image of their common Lord and Master in one another’s character, they cannot but love one another as belonging to the one Church of Christ, wherein dwells His peace. Their words are therefore the healing words of wisdom and meekness and brotherly love; they thus “make peace.” In a word, they strive to realize in their own experience the Saviour’s own beatitude, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” Thus it is, to use the illustration of Ignatius (Ignat. Ep. ad Ephes. iv. and ad Philad. i.), that believers are as the many-stringed lyre, alike touched by the Master’s hand, and so in different notes, but with perfect concord, yielding the melody of praise to God. Such is the ideal of Christian character and conduct. But the Thessalonians had not attained to it. There was that which was lacking in regard to it. Hence the need of the apostolic injunction, “Be at peace among yourselves.”

“Now we exhort you, brethren;” this is addressed, doubtless, not to those in authority in the Church, as some hold, but to the whole body of the *brethren* (*ἀδελφοί*), to the entire company of believers. The duties which are in the following clauses enjoined are duties binding upon all who belong to the household of faith. And what are these duties? “Warn (admonish) them that are unruly.” The Church of Thessalonica, Paul himself being witness, was in many respects an exemplary one; its members “were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia” (1 Thess. i. 7). Notwithstanding this, there were in

their midst some who were insubordinate, unruly. The term is only once found in New Testament Scripture (though its cognate verb appears in 2 Thess. iii. 7), and it is a military one. It means out of place, out of the ranks. Here it represents men who, while they bore the name of Christian, and professed to be or in reality were fighting on Christ's side, were yet ill-ordered, insubordinate in their relation to the general body of believers. The expectation of the near approach of Christ, an expectation held erroneously, had bred mischief in the region of daily Christian duty. Some were found to be neglecting the claims of their individual callings, and apparently also invading the rights and obligations of others in regard to Christian work; individual cases of disorder were manifesting themselves, which, were they not checked by the apostle, would spread, and at last issue in universal defeat. Hence, in the very word he uses, he would remind them that in the ranks of the Christian army there must be no setting aside of discipline, else there would be too surely a courting of disaster. Each one in the army of the living God has a post—his own post too. He must not complain of it; he must not desert it; he must not exchange it for another. It has been assigned to him by the Head of the Church, and "it is required that a man be found faithful." Each Christian must,

"Armed at his station, wait till his Lord be at the gate."

"Comfort the feeble-minded," or as Wycliffe renders it, "the men of little heart." We have here the original of Bunyan's Mr. Feeblemind. The Thessalonian Church was strong in faith, and yet there were some of its members timorous, faint-hearted, of a

desponding and sorrowful spirit. This feeble-mindedness sprang, there is every reason to conclude, not from want of faith in the divine mercy in Christ Jesus, not from the danger of persecution to which they were exposed, but from the failing to lay hold of the assurance that the dead in Christ are safe in His keeping, and assured of an interest in His coming. The feeble-minded are simply those who "were sorrowing as those who had no hope." These needed words of encouragement, and their brethren of stronger faith and clearer views were to find in comforting them the meaning of the saying, "A word spoken in due season, how good is it."

The next clause is "Support the weak;" not, certainly, the weak in the matter of bodily health, but (as in Rom. xiv. 1) the weak in faith,—those who were defective, not in will, but rather in strength, to carry out in all its fulness the precepts of Christian truth, because their consciences were not fully enlightened,—“those who had not yet attained that robust common sense and breadth of conscience which discriminates between truths and superstitions, necessities and expediencies; who were not yet ripe enough Christians to be sure of standing in persecutions” (Mason). Now, in regard to all such, it is God’s grace alone that can offer them secure support; yet, none the less, those of stronger faith are to support them by directing them to that grace, bearing with their infirmities, and while bearing with them, trying to have them removed. Though “babes in Christ,” they are none the less precious in His sight; and those who have attained to a nearer approach to His stature are to bear their burdens for His sake. Paul says to the Corinthians, “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain

the weak ;” and all believers must seek to make this declaration their own.

“Be patient toward all men,” or, as Ellicott, “Be long-suffering to all.” Be gentle, forbearing, patient, slow to anger ; and that, too, not merely towards the unruly and feeble-minded and weak among the brethren, but towards all men. This is the function of a true and ardent Christian love. “Charity suffereth long and is kind ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

Ver. 15. “See,” see to it ; take special care “that none render evil for evil unto any man.” The exhortation has its parallel in Rom. xii. 17, “Recompense to no man evil for evil.” It is a very distinct and emphatic prohibition of the spirit of revenge. It was the characteristic of the heathen, among whom these Thessalonian Christians dwelt, to cherish this spirit. While a few of their nobler teachers, it is true, discouraged it, their teaching was of little avail. But the religion of Christ Jesus “has kindled that spirit of kindness and goodwill in the breast of man (which could not be extinguished even towards an enemy) until it became a practical principle. It has preached as a rule of life for all what had previously been the supreme virtue, or the mere theory of philosophers” (Jowett *in loc.*). The inculcation upon all of the duty of forgiveness, and the making of that duty easy, is one of the crowns of Christian morals. The Saviour, in contrasting His teaching even with the current views of the Jewish people, has said, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil.” His people speak not of the sweetness of revenge, but of the sweetness of forgiveness. They, if theirs be

the mind of Christ, can say (Starke in Lange), "To requite good with evil is devilish; to requite evil with evil is heathenish; to requite good with good is praiseworthy; to requite evil with good is Christian." This latter is the ideal stage of moral perfection. It is the highest stage, and no lower one can be accounted Christian. In so far as we rise up to it, we become "imitators of God"—followers of Christ Jesus, "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." The obligation to obey this precept is, the apostle would here show, resting on every one (*μὴ τις*). There can be no setting of it aside on the part of any believer. Recently rescued from heathenism as these Thessalonian Christians were, and still surrounded as they were by the evil influences of heathen society, they all needed this caution. They had to "see" to it that the desire of revenge found no harbour in their breasts.

But this is not all. So far the exhortation is negative. It merely points out what believers are not to do. But now it becomes positive. "But ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men." The aim set before the Christian is "that which is good;" good in the full compass of the word—the spiritual and also the temporal good of others—everything that in reality can be beneficial to them. The sphere in which this aim is to be first sought is the household of faith,—the consecrated company of the saints,—but it is wider than this,—“to all men.” The believer’s love is one which must embrace the world. His charity must ever expand, till it be lost in the fulness of the bliss of heaven. Then, once more, this good is to be aimed at by active exertion. “Follow,”

the apostle says. It is a Pauline figure, taken from the racecourse. We are to run after—eagerly to seek opportunity of doing good to others—not listlessly waiting for opportunities, but rather determined to find them out. And, last of all, this aim must be a constant one. “*E'er* follow that which is good.” Our following must not only be eager, it must be regular, persistent, ceaseless. The discharge of this duty is the Christian’s highest privilege. He prizes it as such, till at last, both those who do good and those who get good rejoice together in the kingdom of heaven, where patience is no longer needed, for no imperfection exists for its exercise—where there are none “unruly, feeble-minded, weak,” but all are happy, because holy, being all one in Christ.

LECTURE XIX.

*"It is but little we can receive here, some drops of joy
that enter into US, but there WE shall enter into joy,
as vessels put into a sea of happiness."*

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

*"Oratio est temperantiæ custodia, iracundiæ frenum, animi
elati repressio, odii medicina, recta legum jurisque con-
stitutio, regni potentia, trophæum atque vexillum belli,
tutela pacis, virginitatis sigillum, fides nuptiarum, via-
torum præsidium, dormientium custos, agricolarum
fertilitas, navigantium salus, reorum patrona, mærentium
consolatio, lætantium jucunditas, lugentium solamen, mori-
entium sepultura."*

S. EPHREM, *Tract. de Oratione*, in *Corn. a Lapide*.

*"Wherefore I crie, and crie again;
And in no quiet canst Thou be
Till I a thankfull heart obtain
Of Thee.*

*Not thankfull, when it pleaseth me,
As if Thy blessings had spare dayes,
But such a heart, whose pulse shall be
Thy praise."*

GEORGE HERBERT.

"Rejoice alway; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for
this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward."—1 THESS. v.
16-18.

WE come now to a group of short sentences
with which the Epistle hastens on to its close.
Like the corresponding group in Rom. xii. 9 ff.,
they are simple and direct statements of Christian
duty, well fitted to pass readily from mouth to mouth,
and to be easily and permanently remembered. They
may have been immediately addressed to those who
had official position in the Church, and as such they

would be received as texts on which, in their usual exhortations, the teachers would gladly enlarge. They are thus to be regarded as “goads,” to stimulate thought and feeling and practice, as “nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.” They can never lose their preciousness and beauty. They are jewels

“That on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle for ever.”

The first of this group is, “Rejoice evermore.” The Thessalonian converts were living in the sphere of sorrow. The apostle exhorts them to be “girded with gladness.” This rejoicing, being “in the Lord,” is opposed to that spurious joy which is the possession of sinners. Solomon has said, “Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom.” Men turn to “the magic cup, that fills itself anew,” but it tastes in the end of bitterness and death. “Wickedness is sweet in the mouth, yet it is gall of asps within them.” The word “evermore” has no meaning except in connection with what is “joy of *heart*”—one of the fruits of the Spirit. This rejoicing before God is the deep, calm delight of the soul in communion with the Saviour. It is called “a joy of the Holy Ghost,” being wrought by His influences as the Comforter. It is called “My joy” by Christ Himself: He gives it, and earth can never take it away. The son of Sirach’s words are always realized in the case of the believer, “If a man have a good heart toward the Lord, he shall at all times rejoice with a cheerful countenance.” This rejoicing springs out of the three Christian graces which this Epistle so strongly emphasizes—faith, love, and hope. Faith has respect to the divine mercy in Christ Jesus. It accepts that

mercy, and the acceptance thereof brings joy. Love makes us partakers of the divine nature. Those, then, who are loved of God, and love Him in return, cannot but be glad in Him. The Psalmist has said, "They that love Thy name shall be joyful in Thee." Hope—"a lively hope," as Scripture calls it—translates us into an ideal world—a world which to the Christian is the highest reality. Living, then, in such a world into which the sorrows of earth cannot enter, he cannot but be happy. He finds, the stronger and brighter his hope is, that "the hope of the righteous shall be gladness." Hence we find in the Book of the Psalms—the truest and fullest record of the inner history of the soul in all the range of its experiences—that the all-pervading tone is that of holy exultation: "Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." That same book further shows us that this true, enduring joy grows alone out of sorrow. In the natural world the rose, the fairest of flowers, is seen expanding, not on the soft, green lap of the earth, not on the pliant and graceful stalk, but on the rough and prickly thorn. Its loveliness rises out of roughness. So is it in the spiritual world, the flower of the new life, joy in the Holy Ghost, ever unfolding the freshness of new beauty, grows alone out of the hard and thorny stalk of godly sorrow. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Qui non gemit peregrinus, non gaudebit civis" (August. *Epist.*).

It is interesting to notice how in the earliest days of Christianity this joyfulness was a prominent element of religious life. The first believers, "continuing daily in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and

singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people" (Acts ii. 46); and in later and more sorrowful times this characteristic was not wanting. If we turn to the Roman catacombs and question them, we find them strikingly testifying to this. In the earliest chamber, that of Sts. Nereus and Achilleus,—dating back to the beginning of the second century,—we stand face to face with evidences of brightness and gladness. Dean Stanley (*Christian Institutions*, p. 250) thus describes it: "Everything is cheerful and joyous. This to a certain degree pervades all the catacombs. Although some of them must have been made in times of persecution, yet even in these the nearest approach to images of distress and suffering is in the figures of the Three Children in the Fire, Daniel in the Lion's Den, and Jonah naked under the Gourd. But of the mournful emblems which belong to nearly all the later ages of Christianity, almost all are wanting in almost all the catacombs. There is neither the cross of the fifth or sixth centuries, nor the crucifix or the crucifixion of the twelfth or thirteenth, nor the tortures and martyrdoms of the seventeenth, nor the skeletons of the fifteenth, nor the cypresses and death's heads of the eighteenth. There are, instead, wreaths of roses, winged genii, children playing. This is the general ornamentation. It is a variation not noticed in ordinary ecclesiastical history. But it is there. There are two words used in the very earliest account of the very earliest Christian community to which the English language furnishes no exact equivalent; one is their exulting, bounding gladness (*ἀγαλλιάσις*); the other, their simplicity and smoothness of feeling, as of a plain without stones, of a field without furrows (*ἀφελότης*). These

two words from the record of the first century (Acts ii. 46) represent to us what appears in the second century in the Roman catacombs. It may be doubted whether they have ever been equally represented at any subsequent age."

"Pray without ceasing," is the second in the group of exhortations. It has its natural connection with the first. If a man desires to enjoy the privilege and to discharge the duty of rejoicing evermore, he must be careful to obey the command, "Pray without ceasing," for prayerfulness is the atmosphere in which all things appear bright and joyous. The apostle takes for granted that none of his readers will call in question the duty of prayer. What he enjoins is *constancy* in prayer. The emphasis lies on the words, "without ceasing." They are not to be weakened or explained away. They are to be taken in their simple, literal meaning. Like the corresponding passages, "Continuing instant in prayer; continue in prayer; men ought always to pray; I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands," this declares that there must be no cessation, no interruption even, of the believer's prayerfulness. His whole life is to be one of continuous supplication. It is evident, then, that reference is made not to particular times and forms of this duty, but to the proper state of heart without which these times and forms are vain. It has sometimes been wrongly inferred from this and similar precepts that the state of feeling is everything, and that its expression may be left to itself, or even systematically ignored. Emerson, for instance, has not hesitated to say, "As soon as a man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer, kneeling in his

field to weed it; the prayer of the rower, kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers, heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends." There is a snare lurking in such an utterance, all the more that the utterance has much of truth in it. All work done by the Christian in the spirit of Christ is indeed worship, yet the old English poet, Donne, is far nearer the right when he says,—

"In none but us are such mixed engines found,
As hands of double office; for the ground
We till with them; and them to heaven we raise;
Who prayerless labours, or without this, prays,
Doth but one half, that's none."

Prayerfulness, apart from its regular and frequent expression, tends, if we can conceive of it as existing at all, to pass away altogether. But, on the other hand, the so-called saying of prayers, without the conscious effort to retain the ever-present spirit of prayer, tends to formalism, which is unblessed to ourselves and an offence to God. Robertson of Brighton has pithily put it thus, "Wherever prayer degenerates into saying prayers, or when prayer becomes prayers—measured and counted—acts instead of utterances, it is no more a spiritual exercise than the Calmuck's rotation of a metal plate, on which his prayers are inscribed."

This ceaseless prayerfulness, prescribed by the apostle, has its reasonableness in the nature of the renewed life. That life is regarded in Scripture as communion with God. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." The only conceivable way in which, on our part, this communion can be maintained, is the lifting up of the heart in conscious dependence and petition. That life further is

described as work for God. It is a warfare. The weapon of all prayer, then, is that by which alone the victory can be won. Activity in the sphere of the religious life can be rightly directed and sustained only by the spirit of devotion. The Saviour has said, "Men ought alway to pray, and not to faint." To guard, therefore, against fainting, in the way either of weariness in the work or of cowardice in the battle, prayer must be ceaseless. The Church militant must ever be the Church supplicant. Hence, "steady till the going down of the sun" must each soldier of the cross lift up holy hands of prayer. The life in Christ last of all and above all is regarded as a life. Guizot has called man "the only praying being upon earth." In the highest sense these words apply to the believer. Prayer is the very beating of the pulse of his inner life. Life without it would cease to be. Newman (sermon on the text) gathers up this aspect of the matter thus: "A man cannot really be religious one hour and not religious the next. We might as well say he could be in a state of good health one hour and in bad health the next. A man who is religious is religious morning, noon, and night; his religion is a certain character, a mould in which his thoughts, words, and actions are cast, all forming parts of one and the same whole. He sees God in all things; every course of action he directs towards those spiritual objects which God has revealed to him; every occurrence of the day, every event, every person met with, all news which he hears, he measures by the standard of God's will. And a person who does this may be said almost literally to pray without ceasing; for, knowing himself to be in God's presence, he is continually led to address Him reverently, whom he

sets always before him, in the inward language of prayer and praise, of humble confession and joyful trust."

These words lead us up naturally to the third of this group of exhortations. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." We may probably understand the first direction as the more general, the second and third as the more particular, showing how habitual joyfulness can be attained. It exists only in the sphere of prayerfulness and thankfulness. Thankfulness, further, is exhibited here, as well as in other parts of the Epistle, as an inseparable adjunct of prayerfulness. In all heart-communion with God there must be the acknowledgment and the adoration of Him as "the Father of lights," the giver of "every good and perfect gift." It is, besides, thankfulness *in everything* which is here enjoined—a habit of mind and heart which delights to say, "I will bless the Lord *at all times*, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." It is the "giving thanks *always for all things* unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. v. 20). If possible, the clause "in everything" is stronger than these others. It seems to suggest not merely that the heart is at all times and for all things to be grateful, but that the gratitude is to overflow into every action of the life—thanksgiving and thanks-living—"qui dicit Deo gratias, gratias agit Deo" (August.). Thankfulness is a lively sense of benefits received, and a corresponding desire to requite them. Requital! that word has, it is true, no significance in relation to our thanksgiving to God. Yet here is a sense in which we are evermore to pay back, as it were, in active service, what we receive

from Him. That debt ever due—never cancelled, we have ceaselessly to pay, and in paying it to find our highest joy. The apostle adds, “for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” The clause is not to be restricted to the thanksgiving. It embraces also the joyfulness and prayerfulness. The three together represent the believer’s privilege and duty in regard to personal piety—joy of heart blossoming out from prayer and thanksgiving. It is God’s will that it should be so. It is His will “to you-ward,” in regard, that is to say, to His people. He claims this offering at *their* hands. They are distinguished in this from the heathen. Ingratitude especially was the characteristic of the Gentile world. Of them it is said, “When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, *neither were thankful*” (Rom. i. 21). This will of God, further, has been disclosed to His people “in Christ Jesus.” In the realms of nature and of providence we can see His will revealed to us, His will claiming that we should be joyful. He has opened up exhaustless springs of happiness to His intelligent creatures, which to their own loss they themselves so frequently close. In these same realms we can see His will claiming also that we should be prayerful. Everywhere in His works and in His dealings we learn the lesson of our dependence and of our need of His sustaining and protecting and guiding care. In these same realms, further, we can see His will calling upon us to be thankful. He crowns the children of men with tokens of His goodness. Yet alongside of such indications, the realms of nature and of providence show to us many things which, in and by themselves considered, can make men only sorrowful, stolid,—it may with reverence be said,

even ungrateful. But God's will is revealed in clearer, brighter characters in redemption, in the gift of His Son. In Him we have "joy unspeakable and full of glory." In Him we stand in new relationship to the Father of our spirits: He is also our Father reconciled. In Him we have all things and abound. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Hence the divine will, which comes revealed and lovingly sealed to us in Christ Jesus, is also obeyed in Him. Constant joyfulness is "in the Lord." Ceaseless prayerfulness is in His name. All-embracing thankfulness lives in the recognition of Him as heaven's best gift,—the gift of a love which is ever saying to those who accept it, "All things are yours."

LECTURE XX.

*"O Lux beatissima,
Reple cordis intima,
Tuorum fidelium!
Sine tuo numine
Nihil est in homine,
Nihil est innoxium."*

KING ROBERT II. OF FRANCE, *Hymnus de S. Spiritu.*

*"Quicumque sub magisterio Spiritus sancti proficere cupit,
Prophetarum se ministerio doceri sustineat."*

CALVIN IN 1 THESS. v. 20.

*"Ἐσέλαι μὲν γὰρ ἀπλῶς, παντοδαπῶς δὲ κακοί. —
Arist. id est, est simplex virtus, omnigenum
vitium. Facile enim est a scopo aberrare, sed
scopum attingere difficile."*—ERASMUS, *Adages.*

"Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."—1 THESS. v. 19-22.

THE apostle has been speaking of Christian joy, and that joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. He has been urging his readers to the duty of prayer; and it is the Spirit who enables them to cry Abba, Father. Those who pray aright, pray in the Holy Ghost. He has been enforcing the duty of continual thanksgiving, and that duty can be discharged only when the Spirit, the Comforter, has His abode in the heart. It is therefore a natural transition from joy and prayer and thanksgiving to Him who is the source of these, the Spirit, whose influences we are not to disregard and discourage and destroy. Such is the

connection with the preceding context. The apostle, however, appears further to be passing from the contemplation of the duties of strictly personal religion, to those which belong to Christian life in the fellowship of the Church. The precepts which follow point more or less directly to Church life. The metaphor underlying the first precept is not difficult to explain. The Holy Spirit is spoken of not strictly in respect of His Person, but in respect of His energizing power in and on the heart. His workings, the apostle would say, may be so counteracted as to become ineffectual. They may be quenched as the flame that is kindled for a time, but being neglected, sooner or later expires. Rain, dew, wind, fire, these mysterious agencies of nature, are in Scripture the fitting and effective emblems of the Holy Spirit's power in the hearts and lives of men. It is the last of these emblems which Paul here employs. The Spirit in His influences is as the fire. As "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation," He is the *Enlightener*: He illumines "what in us is dark." He is also the *Purifier*: it may be said of His coming, as of that of the Messiah, that it is "like a refiner's fire." He is, further, the *Comforter*: those who receive Him "walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Such are the three leading aspects of the Spirit's work which are here suggested. Pardon, purity, peace are His gifts, and they are all more or less clearly symbolized by the metaphor of fire. But the particular significance of the injunction in the present case is this, that those who are already believers are, in regard to their advancing sanctification, to cherish His manifestations. As fire may be extinguished by simple neglect, or by throwing upon it whatever tends in its nature to

quench, so by disregarding Him or opposing Him we may frustrate His goodwill towards us.

By relapse into sinful indulgences, the follower of Christ Jesus quenches the spirit of grace within his heart. He "grieves the Holy Spirit of God, whereby he is sealed unto the day of redemption. By habitual disregard of His manifestations, persistent stifling of the convictions which He produces, the believer may "resist the Holy Ghost,"—"resist the truth,"—till at last the conscience becomes "seared as with a hot iron," and the state is reached which is described in the fearful words "past feeling." The quenching of the Spirit, however, against which the Thessalonian converts are particularly warned, is apparently that which is effected by error of judgment. There can be little doubt that the reference here is to the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit in the early Church. These are alluded to in 1 Cor. xii. as gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and other miraculous gifts. These were present, we may conclude, in the Church of Thessalonica as well as in that of Corinth. While, therefore, not overvaluing these, believers were not to look upon them with suspicion and distrust. They had their uses in the earliest days of Christianity; and the natural and proper dread of undue enthusiasm and excitement was not to be permitted to blind men to their value. "They were given to profit withal." Those who failed to recognise the proper place of these gifts in the economy of the Church of the first days, were in the ranks of "those that oppose themselves," and were either wilfully or unwittingly quenching the Spirit. To guard against such danger

and guilt, believers were rather to be "*fervent* in Spirit," each one obeying the command, "Stir up the gift that is in thee." Thus, so far from quenching the Spirit, they were to be "able to *quench* all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

The next precept follows naturally. So far from neglecting the Spirit's manifestations, or frustrating His operations, or despising His gifts, the Christian community is enjoined to prize the chief of these, "Despise not prophesyings." The Spirit is the divine power, prophesyings are the human instrumentality. If men would be kept from quenching the one, they must be kept from thinking meanly of the other. The Spirit is the divine light; if they would retain it, they must be careful to preserve prophesyings, the lamp in which it is placed. But what, strictly speaking, were these prophesyings? The subject is invested with some perplexity and uncertainty. Still, with the light thrown upon it in 1 Cor., we can attain to something like definite views regarding it. In the primitive Church, the prophets were those who spoke a message from God and for God in the presence of the assembled people. They were supernaturally guided preachers of divine truth. They exhorted under the immediate impulse of the Holy Spirit, and their utterances supplemented and enforced the teaching of the apostles. "Apostles planted, and prophets watered; the germs engrafted by the one were nurtured and matured by the other" (Eadie on Eph. iv. 11). Hence the Church is described as being "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." Their office, however, was inferior in every way to that of the apostles. Their words have in no case been preserved as part of Scripture. They spoke only for their own

age, not, as did the apostles, for all time. By these prophesyings, then, we are to understand inspired utterance, oracular announcement of God's will in the assembly of the saints. Of all the spiritual gifts belonging to the early Church, that of prophesying was to be most highly valued. Unlike the gift of tongues, it tended directly to "edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3), and it was "for a sign, not for them that believe not, but for them that believe" (1 Cor. xiv. 22); and still further, by its exercise the secrets of the heart were made manifest, and thus the hearer, "falling down on his face, will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 25). This much-prized spiritual gift (a gift "not of *prediction*, but of *inspired preaching*; of forth-telling, not of foretelling; *prædicandi*, not *prædicendi*")—Dr. Vaughan on Rom. xii. 6), while it was capable of being regulated by those who possessed it, was yet, in certain cases, associated with confusion, disorderly manifestations (1 Cor. xiv. 32, 33). It came often to be abused. The adage thus received its illustration, the corruption of the best things is itself the worst of all corruptions. Genuine enthusiasm might fail at times to be restrained within its proper bounds, and actual imposture might use the gift of prophesying as "a cloke of covetousness." Jowett has said here, "In an Eastern country, in the hour of ecstasy or conversion, such manifestations would be likely to be very different from the form which they would exhibit among colder tempers. That weakness or imposture would easily mix itself up with them is self-evident, even if it were not indicated in 2 Thess. ii. 2; 1 John iv. 1. Hence the apostle, while exhorting his converts not to despise them, as elsewhere he

places them first among spiritual gifts (1 Cor. xiv. 1), adds in both places the exhortation to try them." These words give the true *motif* of this injunction, "despise not prophesyings." The precept was needed in Thessalonica, not because the converts there, like those in Corinth, were undervaluing prophesyings as compared with the more brilliant, showy gift of tongues, but because they had experience of certain abuses in prophesyings, and were consequently in danger of reasoning from such abuses against the right and profitable use. So far, then, from setting prophesyings at nought, they were to "covet to prophesy"—they were to give all due heed to the utterances of those in their midst who spoke "as the oracles of God."

It is no unwarrantable stretching of this command to apply it to the ordinary ministry of the word in the Church of Christ. Christianity is pre-eminently what the Arabs call it, the "religion of the Book," and its prophets now are the expositors of that book. To despise their utterances, by entire neglect of them, or by listless attention to them, is to set at nought the divinely-appointed means of grace. The Church of Christ needs still and must ever need *edification*—instruction in the things which pertain to the kingdom; *exhortation*—the receiving of new impulses towards the activities of Christian service; *comfort*—the consolation of the gospel amid trials and sorrows. These words represented the aims of prophesyings in the primitive Church (1 Cor. xiv. 3); and they represent the aims of the Christian ministry still and evermore. Hence the exposition and enforcement of Scripture truth dare never be undervalued or set aside. It is man's agency in one sense, and therefore

the children of the world despise it; but it does God's work, and therefore the children of the kingdom do not fail to honour it. They know how to recognise the whisperings of the Divine Spirit even in the stammering lips of men.

The next clause links itself on to that which precedes it—" (But) prove all things; hold fast that which is good." So far from undervaluing or spurning prophesyings, believers are urged to test them. There were prophets whose teaching was full of error. These false prophets thus brought discredit upon the true. In these circumstances there was the call for cautious and candid judging. There was need of the injunction of the Apostle John, a close parallel with this of Paul, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The unwritten saying of our Lord, "Become ye approved money-changers," or as it is otherwise rendered, "Be ye skilful triers of coin" (*γίνεσθε δόκιμοι τραπεζίται*), has often been cited in this connection. It serves as a fitting illustration. It speaks thus:—as there are counterfeits of the truth in circulation, it is wise on the part of all who would "buy the truth" to test it, to submit it to careful examination, so that they may not be deceived, but may become possessors of that priceless treasure, "gold tried in the fire," that finest gold which alone can make truly rich. The "all things" are of course to be understood as limited by the subject in hand,—all the manifestations or utterances connected with the prophesyings. The duty of proving these is not to be restricted, as Ellicott suggests, to a special class in the Church—those who had the gift of "discerning of spirits." The precept, like all the others in the

group, applies to the general body of believers, as does the corresponding precept in 1 John iv. 1. It holds good of all who are within Christ's Church, that to them pertain the duty and privilege of holding fast what Paul so often calls "sound doctrine," and this can be done only when there is the rejection of all "that is contrary to sound doctrine." Those who have themselves been proved by the Spirit of God, have the Spirit who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." In the case of the apostolic Church, there were tests at hand by which the "all things" might be proved. The first of these was apostolic teaching already received (1 Thess. ii. 2); a second was the general consensus of teaching given by these prophets. These prophets were to judge and discern as to the value of any individual utterance (1 Cor. xiv. 29); yet another test was the central conviction that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Every utterance which in any way was at variance with the confession of that truth was self-condemned, and at once to be rejected (1 John iv. 1-3; *vid.* Düsterdieck *ad loc.*).

The injunction "Prove all things" has its abiding meaning in the Church. It is the duty and privilege of all Christians to judge in religious matters. They "have an unction from the Holy One," that they may "know all things." They are also furnished with the requisite test or rule for the discharge of this duty. They have the Scriptures of truth—"the reed like unto a rod," with which they are to "rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (Rev. xi. 1). There are, of course, limitations here to be laid down and enforced. The command, for instance, does not set aside the recognised

ministry of the word. It rather implies it. It is its teaching which is to be proved. Nor does the command give any foundation for that system of so-called Rationalism in which reason is declared to be the sole judge of revelation. Dryden's couplet is the statement of Christian truth—

“Reveal'd religion first inform'd the sight,
And reason saw not, till faith sprung the light.”

It is the Christian *πνεῦμα* in the believer which enables him to “compare spiritual things with spiritual,” whereas “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (Diese von Paulus empfohlene Prüfung ist also nicht Glaubensprüfung, sondern setzt den Glauben vorans, De Wette *ad loc.*). Then, further, as to Scripture, the only infallible rule of faith and practice as it is, the caution is ever needed in testing it, that it be not our own, and it may be, simply traditional expositions, which we apply, as fixed and unerring. In this way it is that Christ's people in growing enlightenment attain to growing sanctification. They “by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Such discernment is the aim in view. Hence the apostle says here, “Hold fast that which is good.” Proving leads to finding “that which is good,” and finding issues in holding it fast. “Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report” —these are all implied in the word “good,” and they are to be held fast with a tenacity of purpose which can be exhibited only by those who cling to Him who is good, and in possession of whom they possess all good, for time and for eternity alike.

This holding fast of the good exists only where there is an abhorring of that which is evil. Hence follows the closing exhortation, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Considerable contention has gathered around the word rendered "appearance." It certainly does mean shape, fashion, sight, but in such cases there underlies the idea of inherent reality. It does not represent appearance as opposed to reality, although such is the rendering which the authorized version seems to give it. This, therefore, however defended by some leading commentators, must be set aside. So far from avoiding the appearance of evil, it may sometimes be a duty to cling to it. We are, it is true, never ourselves to give an appearance of evil to what is good, but others may do this for us; and in all such cases it is the part of high-minded loyalty to the Master not to shrink from attachment to that which for the time being, and in certain surroundings, *seems* evil, provided in reality it be known to be good. Besides, the antithesis requires a different rendering. The contrast is not between the good which we are to keep, and the semblance of evil which we are to shun. It is between what is really good and no less really evil. Discarding, therefore, the rendering "appearance," what other are we to adopt in its place? Owen (vol. vi. p. 194) translates thus: "Keep yourselves from every figment or idea of sin in the heart." This is entirely unwarranted. The word means in no way a phantasm or image which lays hold of the mind. Besides, the balancing of the clause with its predecessor would in such a rendering be altogether lost. Hilgenfeld suggests a still more unlikely view. Regarding the word in its primary sense of spectacle or figure, he sees in it the corrupting

theatrical exhibitions of the heathen world, against which the Christian community is solemnly warned. This view is entirely fantastic and far-fetched. At best it takes in a part instead of the whole. Another view, first given forth by Hänsel in the *Studien und Kritiken* for 1836, has been usually noticed by commentators; but while its ingenuity has been acknowledged, it has failed to meet with general approval. His suggestion is, that the apostle having before his mind the unwritten saying of our Lord's, already quoted in this lecture, "Be ye approved money-changers," works it out into this precept. Retaining the figurative form of speech, for the saying is a sort of compressed parable, the apostle would thus in effect say, Prove all prophesyings as you would test current coin; keep all the good, and every kind of counterfeit reject,—have nothing to do with. Like money-changers with coin, be ye careful to shun whatever is false in doctrine. This view substantially brings out the truth of the passage; but it is liable to the charge of being fanciful, in so far as its supposed allusion to the Lord's unwritten saying is involved. The decidedly most simple and natural rendering is that of the revised version, "Abstain from every form of evil." The contrast is to be noticed; "that which is good" is one; evil on the other hand has many forms—Proteus-like it takes to itself many shapes, and all are to be recognised and shunned. The precept, too, as its form implies, extends beyond the preceding context. While its first reference is to evil elements, which might appear in the prophesyings, it purposely expands so as to embrace every kind of evil into contact with which the follower of Christ may be brought. In regard to all moral evil, he is enjoined "to keep him-

self unspotted from the world." Thus in its all-embracing caution the precept fitly closes the Epistle. "Every evil work" is to be abjured by those who have "put on Christ," and every evil thought is to be subdued—"bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Thus alone can believers look forward to "the white radiance of eternity," in which they shall be like Him in holiness, and walk with Him in white, being worthy.

LECTURE XXI.

“Ψυχὴ ἐν σώματι ἐστίν, οὐ ζῆ δὲ ἄψυχον. Σῶμα ψυχῆς ἀπολειπούσης οὐκ ἐστίν. Οἶκος γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ψυχῆς· πνεύματος δὲ ψυχὴ οἶκος.”—JUSTIN MARTYR, *Fragmenta*.

“*Neque enim plasmatio carnis ipsa secundum se homo perfectus est; sed corpus hominis, et pars hominis. Neque enim et anima ipsa secundum se homo; sed anima hominis, et pars hominis. Neque spiritus homo. Spiritus enim, et non homo vocatur. Commixtio autem et unio horum omnium, perfectum hominem efficit.*”—IRENÆUS, *Contra Hæreses*.

“And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it. Brethren, pray for us. Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss. I adjure you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”—1 THESS. v. 23-28.

CHRISTIAN joy has been described as the habitual frame of mind and heart which believers are enjoined to cherish; and this joy can be theirs only when it has its source and manifestation in unceasing prayerfulness, and in all-pervading thankfulness. In order to the attainment of these, care must be taken that the influences of the Holy Spirit be not quenched. His manifestations are not to be neglected; His operations are not to be frustrated; His gifts are not to be despised. On the contrary, Christ's people must be “fervent in spirit,” they must prize prophesyings and profit by them; using the means of grace provided

for them, accepting the preaching of the word as the appointed channel through which the Spirit's influences are to reach the heart. Instead of undervaluing prophesyings, they are exhorted to prove, to test "all things"—to "try the spirits," that so they may be strong to hold fast whatever is good, and to shrink with loathing from every kind of evil.

Such is the closing statement of Christian duty; and following thereupon we have the utterance on the part of the apostle of earnest intercessory prayer. There is much of instruction and of comfort in this apostolic prayer. The blessing prayed for is that the Thessalonian believers may be sanctified wholly—that their spirit and soul and body may be preserved. In these words we are confronted with the well-worn controversy regarding the Scripture doctrine of the nature of man. Have we here a distinct testimony to the tripartite nature—what is called trichotomy, or the doctrine of the threefold substance in human nature? There are those who hold that, whatever be the right view in regard to this question, this verse at all events gives no utterance thereon. For instance, De Wette sees in it simply a rhetorical enumeration; and Jowett has this note, "Had St. Paul a distinct thought attached to each of these words? Probably not. He is not writing a treatise on the soul, but pouring forth, from the fulness of his heart, a prayer for his converts. Language thus used should not be too closely analyzed. His words may be compared to similar expressions among ourselves, *e.g.* 'with my heart and soul.' Who would distinguish between the two? Neither did the age in which St. Paul lived admit of any great accuracy in speaking of the human soul; nor does the fluctuating use of such terms in

other parts of Scripture imply any precise or exact distinction." But it is surely legitimate to reply to this note, that language like this of the apostle, while it does breathe a special elevation and fervour, is none the less marked by an equally special exactness and minuteness, and therefore has a peculiarly evidential value. Nor is its testimony to be disparaged because it does not appear in a treatise or section dealing with the nature of the soul. If we follow a canon of this kind, we must remodel our whole mode of exegesis. And once more, while it is true that "heart and soul," and similar expressions, are in use in common daily language, without implying in those who use them any exactness of definition, their very use implies that a distinction, essentially recognised, does lie behind them. And last of all, whatever may have been the fluctuating characteristics of the philosophy of Paul's age, we are surely not on that account to deny the possibility of finding a Pauline psychology at all. But there are also theologians of a very different school from that of De Wette or Jowett, who make light of this passage, so far as its evidence as to the nature of man is concerned. Dr. Marcus Dodds (*N. T. Commentary*, edited by Dr. Schaff) cites Jowett's note with apparent approval, and Dr. Hodge (*Systemat. Theol.* ii. p. 49) says that the apostle "only uses a periphrasis for the whole man," and classes the passage with others, such as Luke i. 46, 47, x. 27; Heb. iv. 12; Phil. i. 27, where he seeks to show that no distinction between soul and spirit can be affirmed. But not to speak of these passages, which are quite capable of another exposition than that which Dr. Hodge gives (*vid.* Ellicott's *Destiny of the Creature*, sermon on the "Threefold Nature of Man," and notes), and while it is

true that Paul not infrequently speaks of body and soul, or body and spirit, as representing simply the visible and invisible in man, we feel that we cannot be warranted in lightly setting aside the testimony of such a passage as this. It has been generally acknowledged that, with something like marked precision, it sets forth "the mysterious economy of our being." This, too, appears the more probable when we look carefully at the structure of the clauses. "The position of the epithet *whole* shows that the prayer is not that the *whole* spirit, soul, and body, the three associated together, may be preserved, but—that each part may be preserved *in its completeness*. Not mere associated preservation, but preservation in an individually complete state, is the burden of the apostle's prayer. The prayer is, in fact, threefold: *first*, that they may be sanctified by God, the God of peace—for sanctification is the condition of outward and inward peace—wholly (*ὁλοτελείς*), in their collective powers and constituents; *next*, that each constituent may be preserved to our Lord's coming; and *lastly*, that each, so preserved, may be entire and complete in itself, not mutilated or disintegrated by sin; that the body may retain its uneffaced image of God, and its unimpaired aptitude to be a living sacrifice to its Maker; the appetitive soul, its purer hopes and nobler aspirations; the spirit, its ever-blessed associate, the Holy and eternal Spirit of God" (Ellicott, *Destiny of Creature*, p. 107). The apostle, then, does adopt the trichotomy which in some form or other may be said to belong to almost all systems of philosophy. "Body, soul, spirit—it is the combination of these three which makes up our nature; it is the due relations between these three which constitute our

sole possible happiness; it is the right training of these three that is the object of that life-long education which should begin with our earliest years, and end only with the grave" (Farrar's *In the Days of my Youth*, sermon on "The Triple Sanctification"). But how are these properly to be distinguished? Spirit is the highest, the noblest part of our being, that part which is formed to look upwards, which connects man with God and heavenly things—that part which the regenerating Spirit of God first touches, being that to which divine truth directly makes its appeal. Hence the renewed man is the spiritual man (ὁ πνευματικός). Soul is the living principle, the seat of the personality, including the intellect, the affections, and the will. This soul in fallen man is corrupt. Hence the unrenewed man, being "sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude ver. 19), is the animal man (ὁ ψυχικός). Body, the corporeal frame, is the casement of the soul and spirit, the tabernacle in which they dwell, "the garment we see them by," their servant in honour and dishonour.

This doctrine of the threefold nature of man has often been looked upon with peculiar suspicion. In early times it was estimated, not on its own merits or demerits, but simply rejected, largely because of heresies which had unjustly been grafted upon it. The Gnostics held that the spirit, being part of the divine essence, was sinless. The followers of Apollinaris held that our Lord, while He possessed a human body and soul, had no human spirit. Hence the doctrine which was erroneously supposed to favour those views came to be discredited in the Eastern Church. In the Western Church also the teaching of Tertullian and Augustine moulded general theological opinion against

it. More candid views, however, have now to a large extent prevailed. And while the exposition of this passage, which we have adopted, is very generally accepted as right, it is vindicated from the charge of giving support to doctrinal views which are wrong.

In the case, then, of Christ's people, the apostle's prayer is that body, soul, and spirit be preserved "entire, without blame," being sanctified wholly — each in its complete measure and perfect proportions. Delivered from the dominion of sin and Satan, they are in God's keeping unto holiness. The whole man is to become wholly man of God.¹

Archer Butler (sermon, "The Faith of Man and the Faithfulness of God") thus writes: "The entire of our feeble humanity is sheltered under this canopy of divine protection. The 'body' is subdued into its place as humble minister to the soul; the 'soul' is guarded from its own special corruptions; and the 'spirit'—the element that, given from heaven, is still nearest to heaven—is preserved undecayed amid a hostile world. Here is a defence for this triple nature of man. And, of a surety, the mystic Trinity that occupies the throne of heaven will not forget this humble image of their ineffable mystery (for so the divines of old were wont to regard it) which the apostle has thus assigned to our inferior being! Surely 'the soul' will be preserved by that creative Deity who first infused it into the frame; the 'body,' by that Eternal Son who was pleased to assume it; and the 'spirit,' by that ever-blessed Spirit who Him-

¹ Ohne lebensetzendes πνεῦμα wäre der Mensch nicht lebendig, ohne stoffliches σῶμα wäre sein Leben kein leibliches, und ohne ψυχή wäre er kein selbstständig lebendiges Einzelwesen.—Hofmann.

self bestows it, and well may guard His own inestimable gift."

It is worthy of notice, before leaving this part of the subject, how the religion of Christ Jesus has ennobled even the human body. The Alexandrian philosophy breathed throughout a spirit of lofty ascetic contempt of the body. Perfection was to be attained through self-denial, and that alone through the unnatural subjection of the body. Thus there arose very naturally a state of mind in which "the material frame became an object of disgust and detestation, as interfering with the completeness of all contemplative effort. Plotinus refused to permit his picture to be taken, because it would unduly perpetuate the image of a body he deplored; and avoided all mention of the date or locality of his birth, as too dark and miserable an epoch to be remembered" (Archer Butler's *Lectures on History of Ancient Philosophy*, p. 519). Christianity, whatever false forms it may have assumed in the history of the Church, inculcates no such teaching. While it commends those who "mortify the deeds of the body," and who "keep under the body, and bring it into subjection," it assigns to the body, in and by itself considered, its due honour, and, as this passage shows, assigns to it a future state of perfection and glory.

We have seen what the blessing is which the apostle desires for his brethren in Christ. But what is the ultimate purpose to be served by its bestowal? He desires them to be sanctified and preserved entire and blameless "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the pure in heart alone who are to see God. Those only who are "preserved in Jesus Christ and called" can "enter in through the gates into the

city." "Without are dogs" and "everything that defileth."

Whence comes this entire sanctification—this preservation of body and soul and spirit? It is of God: it is His work. Men cannot make themselves whole and meet for heaven. "God *Himself*," the apostle says, suggesting possibly a contrast between man's own unaided efforts and the all-transforming efficacy of divine grace. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." In this connection, too, it is to be noticed, He is expressly called "the God of peace." He is so in Himself, in the nature and design of His gospel, in "the constitution and administration of His Church." He is the God of peace, inasmuch as He manifests His divine nature and power in making peace a reality, an abiding possession in the hearts of His people. (Compare the parallel title, "God of hope," in Rom. xv. 13.) Peace and purity in their source and issue are one and the same. They cannot be severed. Hence in this passage, and also in Heb. xiii. 20, this favourite Pauline designation of God (*Liebblingsname Gottes*, Delitzsch, Heb. xiii. 20)—"the God of peace," appears in the same connection of thought—the making of His people perfect. He who offers to men peace in Christ Jesus, who is "our Peace," can give it only in pardon and purity, in reconciliation with Himself. It is only in this saving union with Him that men can have completeness—that wholeness which is holiness, and without which they cannot see Him.

But prayer, on behalf either of ourselves or others, for increase and perfection of holiness, implies trust. Hence, in order that this trustfulness may be strengthened and increased, the apostle adds, "Faithful is He

that calleth you, who also will do it.” “Faith in man and faithfulness in God are the two members of one spiritual harmony.” We cannot think of the one without also thinking of the other. And here we have God’s faithfulness declared to us in the most blessed of all connections—in regard to our sanctification and entire preservation without blame at the coming of our Saviour. The reference is not in any way to temporal comfort and ease and safety. No allusion is made to immunity from trial. God’s faithfulness towards His people, it is true, will not fail them when they are compassed about with sufferings. But the allusion is to that which is infinitely better and higher than deliverance from these. God is faithful in the matter of His people’s sanctification, and that is the main point with every regenerated soul. God’s faithfulness, further, is declared in relation to His own gracious covenant. “He that calleth you;” the present participle represents the calling as being a continuous work of grace. He who gives this calling from on high will prove faithful to His own purpose, His design in making His people “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” He cannot suffer His own calling to become null and void. There lies therefore in His calling a blissful guarantee of their final sanctification, for His faithfulness is allied with infinite power.

Having thus presented this fervent prayer on behalf of his Thessalonian friends, Paul now turns aside, very characteristically, to ask their pleadings with that same “God of peace” on behalf of himself and his fellow-labourers. “Brethren, pray for us”—about us (*περί*); that is to say, make us the subject of your supplications. Our persons, our circumstances,—above all, our

apostolic work, — let these be remembered in your approaches to a throne of grace, and this, too, particularly (for the words which follow imply it) in the public intercessions of the sanctuary. Paul, as he dictated these words, was in special need of such prayers. In his labours, night and day, in the workshop, in his prolonged and eager discussions in the synagogue, in his being “pressed in spirit” while he was in Corinth, in his “weakness and fear and much trembling,” he felt his need of divine help; and while he sought it by leaning upon the arm of strength, he leaned also on the sympathy and prayers of his converts themselves, weak and troubled like himself as they were. He who was giving thanks always for them all, making mention of them in *his* prayers (1 Thess. i. 2), in the yearning love of his heart now asks them to make mention of himself in *their* prayers. Such is Christian fellowship. The apostolic teacher turns from instruction and exhortation and warning to supplication for help — not man’s help indeed, but God’s, yet God’s help brought near to him through the intercessory prayer of God’s own people.

In ver. 26 we have the apostle’s earnest and affectionate entreaty and exhortation to dwell together in unity: “Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.” This kiss, “the kiss of charity” as it is called in 1 Pet. v. 14, was “an *holy* kiss.” But the word “holy” does not (as Calvin and Philippi on Rom. xvi. 16 hold) explain the injunction away by giving it a purely spiritual significance. It was a ceremonial kiss, which was holy in this sense, that it was the expression and seal of sacred fellowship — brotherhood in Christ Jesus. It is called holy, further, inasmuch as it was the symbolic declaration that all worldly distinctions are lost

sight of in the company of those who possess "the common salvation." Chrysostom (on 1 Cor. xvi. 20) says that "the kiss doth not only unite those that are divided, but it likewise makes an equality between those that are unequal; which is a necessary thing to all friendship." By this peace, he says (on Rom. xvi. 16—"The Peace" was the technical name for the holy kiss), "the apostle takes away all that disquieted them, and makes that the great will not despise the less, nor the less envy the great; but both pride and envy will be cast out—this kiss being of that nature that it sweetens, smooths, and equals all things." This "kiss of peace," in the earliest times so essential a part of social worship that to omit it was an indication of heavy sorrow, has mostly passed away. It lingered in the Western Church till the close of the thirteenth century. Dean Stanley (*Christian Institutions*, p. 57) notices that "this primitive practice now exists only in the small Scottish sect of the Glassites or Sandemanians." In the Eastern Church it still to some extent remains. "In the Russian Church, perhaps in other Eastern Churches, the clergy kiss each other during the recital of the Nicene Creed, to show that charity and orthodoxy should always go together, not, as is too often the case, parted asunder. In the Coptic Church, the most primitive and conservative of all Christian Churches, it still continues in full force."

Ver. 27. "I charge you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the holy brethren." If the word "holy" be retained (but the weight of authority is upon the whole against it), it possibly throws back the thought to the sanctification referred to in ver. 23. The brethren, for whose sanctification Paul so fervently prays, he even now calls saints. The charge

is given, in the nature of the case, to the office-bearers—the overseers of the Christian community (ver. 12), and it is given with peculiar solemnity. It is emphasized by the uncommon clause, “by the Lord.” They are adjured in the name of Him who rules over His own Church, and is to come as judge. “He holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”

The burden of this solemn charge is, that this Epistle be read in public to the whole body of the Christian people. And why? Various answers have been given. For instance, it has been said that Paul feared, because of dissension among the elders in Thessalonica, that his letter might remain unread. There is, however, no reason to think so unworthily of these rulers and teachers. Again, it has been said, that having desired so earnestly to see himself, they might disregard his letter as a somewhat poor and unwelcome substitute for his personal visit. But surely the very opposite conclusion should be reached. If their vehement desire to see his face was ungratified, they would all the more gladly prize and peruse his written words. The simple and natural explanation of this solemn adjuration is, that the apostle had written a letter of direction and comfort to those whose hearts were heavy with sorrow—to those whose sorrow arose from earlier words of his own, which they had misunderstood. He would then, with all the urgency of his affection, enjoin the attentive listening to his counsel upon all the believers. He would have them all share in its message of consolation and warning.

We are entitled, however, to go beyond the immediate reference, and to see in this command an injunction

laid upon the faithful Church of all time to the regular reading and systematic study of Scripture, of which Paul's own Epistles are no unimportant part. The Church of Rome has fallen from this obligation. What the apostle has with such solemn adjuration enjoined, that Church has, at least so far as the vernacular is concerned, with solemn anathema forbidden (*Quod Paulus cum adjuratione jubet, id Roma sub anathemate prohibet*, Bengel). The closing words of Bishop Jewel's *Commentary*, slightly tinged as they are with a controversial colouring, may therefore well be had in perpetual remembrance. "How agreeth Paul in this charge with them that in no case would have the people read the Scriptures? that say, ignorance is the mother of devotion? It is the word of God the Father; why should not the people of God understand it? It is the water that springeth out to everlasting life; why should the people of God be driven away, and not suffered to drink thereof? It is the light of the world; why should the people be hoodwinked, and kept that they should not look up and see it? Why should they sit and perish in the darkness of death? It is the will of God that all should know Him, from the least to the greatest among them. St. Paul saith: 'Whatsoever things are written aforetime, are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.' Christ saith: 'This is life eternal, to know Thee to be the only very God, and whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.' Let us not forget these words of St. Paul. 'I charge you in the Lord,' by His death, by His cross, by His blood, by the day of His appearance, that this Epistle be read to the learned and unlearned, to the wise and simple, to the

masters and to the servants, to all our brethren, to all the sons of God."

Ver. 28. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." In all the variations in which it appears in the Pauline Epistles, this benediction never has the word "grace" wanting. It is the central word, giving life and preciousness to all the rest. It is peculiarly the apostle's own mark—his badge of cognizance, as it has been called. Having himself received so signally this grace, he loves to use the word as his very sign-manual—"which is the token in every Epistle, so I write." This, his first Epistle, fittingly begins and closes with that word, which above all others reveals the summed sweetness of the whole Gospel. Those who have this "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" with them on earth, cannot fail to have glory with Him hereafter in heaven.

"Amen." The word has no rightful place in the text. It must, however, be used as the utterance of what has a place in our hearts. We are called upon to give our joyful assent to the benediction, as its peace falls upon our spirit. The Talmudic saying represents a Christian truth, "Whosoever says Amen, to him the gates of Paradise are open."

.

SECOND THESSALONIANS.

LECTURE XXII.

"In via virtutis qui non proficit, deficit."

*"O life, O death, O world, O time,
O grave, where all things flow,
'Tis yours to make our lot sublime
With your great weight of woe.
Though sharpest anguish hearts may wring,
Though bosoms torn may be,
Yet suffering is a holy thing;
Without it what were we?"*

TRENCH.

*"Oft in life's stillest shade reclining,
In desolation unrepining,
Without a hope on earth to find
A mirror in an answering mind.
Meek souls there are, who little deem
Their daily strife an angel's theme,
Or that the rod they take so calm,
Shall prove in heaven a martyr's palm."*

KEBLE.

"Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions, and in the afflictions which ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us."—
2 THESS. i. 1-7.

IT has been supposed by a few commentators of recent times that this so-called Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is in reality the First, having had assigned to it the second place simply on the ground that it is the shorter of the two. It has also been held

by some critics, who do not hesitate to acknowledge the genuineness of the first Epistle, that this, the second, must be declared un-Pauline. These decidedly erratic views have been very frequently discussed and so generally set aside, that the tendency of late has been to disregard them altogether. The arguments in support of them have hardly even the semblance of strength.

We have every reason to conclude that this Epistle was penned by Paul while he was still in Corinth, and only a few months later than the first. In the interval, he had been in receipt of further tidings regarding his converts in Thessalonica. These were tidings both of good and of evil. He rejoiced on learning of their progress in Christian life and work. He mourned on learning of their restless and disorderly idleness. He asserted his apostolical authority on learning of the fraudulent, or at least unwarranted, use which had been made of his name in support of erroneous doctrine.

This Epistle then gives utterance to his thankfulness in view of the good, his anxiety in view of the evil; his just self-assertion in view of the false teaching which was leading his converts astray.

In range of subject, and in structure and style, this second letter bears a close resemblance to the first. In general outline the two are almost the same. Indeed, of Paul's Epistles as a whole it may be said, "Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which they combine a singular uniformity of method with a rich exuberance of detail. In this respect they are the reflex of a life infinitely varied in its adventures, yet swayed by one simple and supremely dominant idea. Except when special circumstances, as in the Epistles to the

Corinthians, modify his ordinary plan, his letters consist, as a rule, of six parts, viz. : 1. A solemn salutation ; 2. An expression of thankfulness to God for His work among those to whom he is writing ; 3. A section devoted to religious doctrine ; 4. A section devoted to practical exhortation ; 5. A section composed of personal details and greetings ; and 6. The final autograph-benediction, which served to mark the authenticity of the Epistle" (Farrar's *St. Paul*, i. p. 605). The scheme thus stated is followed in the present Epistle, the transitions from one part to another being apparent on the very surface.

While in subject-matter and form the two Epistles are so much alike, the second is in some respects clearly a continuation of its predecessor ; and in addition to many minor points which are peculiarly its own, its outstanding characteristic is its doctrine of the rise and fall of Antichrist, and this in so far as it stands in immediate connection with the advent of the Lord.

This Epistle opens with the mention of the same apostolic group as does the first. Paul was not alone ; Silvanus and Timotheus were still with him in closest fellowship of toil and suffering. The salutation which, in his own name and in that of his friends, he addresses to the Thessalonian Church is the same as in the earlier letter. The Church, too, is described in the same way. The blessing pronounced upon it is in its terms the same, and is represented as coming from the same divine source. Still further, the apostle gives expression, as before, so again, to his devout thankfulness to God for the graces of the new life which his converts exhibit. Ver. 3, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet." Thanks-

giving appears in all the apostle's writings as a duty, the performance of which was his constant delight. It was a dutiful thing to render thanks on behalf of his converts; and in this case it was pre-eminently a becoming thing, because his prayers for their spiritual welfare—prayers to which in the first Epistle he makes direct reference—had very signally been answered. "Because," rather, for that, "your faith groweth exceedingly." The expression, as is generally noticed, is an enthusiastic one. It is no cold and measured statement. It is the joyful acknowledgment of a generous heart. Their faith, which at first may have been as "a grain of mustard seed," had kept on growing. Its life was evinced by its growth, and that growth was regular and rapid (*ὑπερανξάνει*). "And the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." There lies in this a backward allusion to 1 Thess. iii. 12. Paul had prayed that this abounding, expanding love might be the ever-increasing possession of the Thessalonian believers, and that prayer, he now declares, had been heard. Their faith, which rested on Christ Jesus Himself, was accompanied and manifested by a love which, in the case of each individual believer, went out towards the brethren. It was a love which spent itself ungrudgingly and unceasingly in acts of mutual burden-bearing and service.

So far from there being any decline in these graces, there was conspicuous progress. In the Christian life it ought always to be so. True steadfastness is a standing fast, but it can never be a standing still. Continuance in all the elements of prosperity of soul, as regards both the individual and the community, is ensured only by advancement in them. While the apostle contemplates the increase of these graces in his

friends, he also recognises it as a special token of divine goodness to himself. His heart had been full of anxious solicitude about each convert, and he thanks God that his fears were now dispelled, and his hopes almost more than realized. But he does more. He says, ver. 4, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God." "We ourselves," that is, not we glory in *you*, as opposed to glorying in *ourselves*, as some have strangely construed the words; but we, as well as others,—we, who have so direct an interest in your Christian character, making you the subject of our constant prayers, and regarding you as "our glory and joy" (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20), speak of you with a holy pride. There may lie in the expression, "we ourselves," an allusion also to what had been written in the earlier Epistle. In the tender refinement of his praise, he had said (1 Thess. i. 8) that "in every place" their faith to Godward was so "spread abroad," that there was no need that he himself should make it known. But now, with equal tenderness of language, he, as it were, retracts what he had said. He says, we ourselves cannot help now joining in the common commendation. "In the churches of God," in Corinth and the surrounding district, and indeed wherever his missionary journeys might tend, he spoke of them, and would continue to speak of them, as eminent trophies, from heathenism, of the cross of Christ. This meed of praise was their due, and the rendering of it was a benefit to others. Paul's glorying in them was the setting of them forth to others as an example by which these might profit. In primitive times, when the corrupting influences of heathen life were everywhere surging around them, the little scattered Christian communities could not but take the deepest interest in

learning of each other's welfare, and could not but gain new accessions of spiritual strength by each other's example. It was then as a pattern to others that the apostle gloried in the Thessalonian believers, because of their patient endurance and trustfulness amid trials from without—"persecutions" from Jewish and Gentile malignity, and "tribulations," the varied sufferings arising therefrom. A new outbreak of hostility appears at this very time to have taken place, for the apostle says, "which ye *are* enduring" (*αἷς ἀνέχεσθε*). The Church in the midst of it was "beset with leaguer of stern foes," and in its steadfastness they were showing what a noble thing it is to suffer and be strong. Under adverse influences, the Church was able "to grow as the lily and cast forth roots as Lebanon." Patience was as the lily in the white blamelessness of its character. Faith was as the cedars of Lebanon, even as Lebanon itself in the stability of its strength.

The exhibition of these graces was a conclusive evidence of the sincerity of the Christian profession which they adorned. But it was an evidence of something more. Ver. 5, "Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God." The way in which suffering was endured was an evidence of the divine moral government. In this passage the demands of grammatical precision are hardly satisfied. We find instances of similar disregard of form, if we may so call it, in the writings of the apostle, more especially at times when his thought has caught fire from the emotions of his heart. In this respect it may be said that no writer has more strikingly illustrated the dictum of Heinrich Heine than he, "The style is the man himself" ("Der Stil ist der Mensch selber"). The words "which is" might with profit give way to

a simple dash; the clause which they introduce is in apposition to the whole preceding clause, "Your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations which ye endure." The exhibition of these graces on the dark background of suffering was not merely an example—it was not only a spectacle which the heathen had never seen before, for *their* acts of heroic endurance had no root in patience and faith. It was distinctly a setting forth, an exhibition to all who have the eyes of their understanding enlightened, of the rectitude of God's dealings.

Suffering under a just God would indeed be an enigma apart from the stern reality of sin. But looked at in the lurid light of sin, it comes in part to be explained. Suffering in this sinful world is a manifest token that God reigns in justice. The divine wrath (*ὀργή*) rises up in righteous judgment against transgression. Were it not so, God's moral government would cease to be. But in the present passage the reference is to suffering endured not by the wicked, but by those who are God's own people. Is there no perplexity involved in such a fact? How are we to explain the relation of Christians to the world as one of affliction? Simply in this way, that their character and conduct excite its hostility. Christians, being witness-bearers against sin, being a living conscience to the world, understand why it is that in the world they have tribulation. Their Master has said, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;" and in 1 Thess. iii. 3 we read, "Yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." But how, it is further to be asked, is suffering on the part of God's people, when borne with patience and faith, "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God"? The

apostle gives answer, "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." That is to say, in regard to this life, this "righteous judgment of God" is seen to tend to account them and declare them worthy of "the kingdom and glory," for which even now they are suffering tribulation. Thus in their patience making their souls their own, they are accounted meet at last—

"With all their being rearranged,
Pass'd through the crucible of time"—

to enter into the rest of eternity. Thus, too, the genuineness of Christian character being proved by patience in tribulation, Satan's calumny about good men not serving God for nought (Job i. 8-12) is repelled, and the ways of God to men are justified. But we have not yet reached the chief point of the apostle's argument. Ver. 6 shows that it is the future, not this present life, which is brought into connection with "the righteous judgment of God"—"seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us." What appeals to men's sense of right in their dealings with one another, holds good in regard to God's dealings with them. Exemption from suffering on the part of the wicked in this life suggests the thought to men,—it has always done so, even when no revelation has been present to teach,—that there is a future, when inconsistencies, as they appear to be, will be done away with, and an adjustment of all moral relations will be made. God's just judgment will mete out just recompense (compare Ps. xxxvii. 34-38). There is a very solemn parallel with our passage, in the words of the

Saviour Himself, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 25), "Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." There is yet another parallel in Phil. i. 28, "In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token (*ἔρδειξις*) of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." We have there poised, much in the same way as in the present passage, these two things: perdition to the persecutor, salvation to the persecuted.

The "*justitia Dei remuneratrix*" has to do with both of these. The eye that is ever watchful is "as a flame of fire." There is yet another passage which throws its light upon this, 1 Pet. iv. 17-19, "If judgment first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." If even God's people endure so much suffering now, what must be in reserve for His enemies hereafter!

In the apostle's language there is a studied repetition of the word, which the Authorized Version has failed to preserve. The Revised Version, however, has restored it, "Affliction to them that afflict you." "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

The last words of the Dutch patriot, von Straalen, as he bowed his neck to the executioner's stroke, were words of bitter disappointment as he thought of his unrequited work, "For faithful service, evil recom-

pense." So is it often in this world's injustice. It is never so with "the righteous judgment of God." It metes out indeed trouble to troublers; but to the troubled, rest,—relief from overstrain, as the word properly means,—the Sabbatism of heaven, when earth's week-day work is done. The apostle says further, "Rest with us." That is to say, not with us, Jewish Christians,—the Thessalonians, who were Gentiles, being thus declared as sharing in the same privileges with their Jewish brethren; nor is it, with us, the whole company of believers, without limitation or distinction, for all believers were not at that time troubled. "With us," simply means with Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus. These three fellow-labourers were themselves eminent sufferers for the truth's sake, and Paul classes his Thessalonian friends along with himself and them. They are all one in their faith and troubles, and so shall they be in their final and full rewards. Thus we see the apostle, while he longed himself for rest, comforting others with the prospect of it. Suffering had not sealed up within his heart the fountain of sympathy for others; it made it all the more to overflow. He was "able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God."

By the word "rest," Paul directs the thoughts of his reader forward and upward, "all but opening heaven already by his word" (Chrysostom). There is, indeed, a power in the word to comfort and sustain those in whose hearts "burns the hot fever of unrest." It is a word of promise to all faithful but weary workers in every noble cause. Erasmus once wrote (*De ratione concionandi, Ep. Dedic.*), "No one will easily believe how anxiously, for a long time, I

have wished to retire from these labours into a scene of tranquillity, and, for the rest of my life (dwindled, it is true, to the shortest span), to converse only with Him who once cried, and who still does cry, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ In this turbulent and, I may say, raging world, amid so many cares, which the state of the times heaps upon me in public, or which declining years and infirmity cause me in private, nothing do I find on which my mind can more comfortably repose than on this secret communion with God.” The pathetic longing of these words for a repose that comes not at man’s call is yet to attain to satisfaction. When earth and time have passed away, “there remaineth a rest to the people of God.”

“ Resting, but not in slumbrous ease,
Working, but not in wild unrest,
Still ever blessing, ever blest,
They see us as the Father sees.”

The author of *The Christian Scholar*, in his “Classical Complaints and Scriptural Remedies,” has very touchingly contrasted the unrest of the heathen world with the rest which is the lot of believers. He describes the Temple of Rest (Livy, iv. 41) standing outside of the city of Rome, and the true rest which is within the city of God.

“ Rest had no place amid that throng,
Where multitudinous rise
Rome’s stately temples, which belong
To evil deities.

“ Her Temple is without the gate,
Beyond the Esquiline;
No rest but is beyond the state
Wherein the dead recline.”

Such is the classical complaint ; the scriptural remedy is—

“ Many the gold-paved streets Divine
By meek obedience trod,
But rest is as the inmost shrine
In city of our God.

“ Within—within—yea, farther still
By energy of woes,
By prayers, and alms, and bearing ill,
We find in Christ repose.”

LECTURE XXIII.

*"So shall the world go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
The woman's seed obscurely then foretold,
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord,
Last in the clouds from heav'n to be reveal'd
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world, then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
New heav'ns, new earth, ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness and peace and love,
To bring forth fruits joy and eternal bliss."*

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, xii. 537.

"At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day. To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."—2 THESS. i. 7-12.

THE rest awaiting Christ's troubled saints is in the fullest sense to be their possession "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus." He who is emphatically the Coming One (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) is at last to be revealed. There is a vividness in the word. He is now hidden. When on His ascension He was taken up in the presence of His disciples, "a cloud received Him out

of their sight." But that cloud-veil is yet to be drawn aside. When He comes again, "every eye shall see Him." This revelation of the glorified Saviour is "from heaven." The actual manifestation is to be from the highest heaven where He now is, for Him "the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21). Hence "our conversation ought to be in heaven, because from thence we look for our Saviour the Lord Jesus. Our High Priest is gone up into the Holy of Holies not made with hands, there to make an atonement for us; therefore as the people of Israel stood without the tabernacle expecting the return of Aaron, so must we look unto the heavens and expect Christ from thence. We must look upon Him as coming thence, as well as sitting there; and to that purpose Christ Himself hath joined them together, saying, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'" (Pearson *On the Creed*). "The angels of His power," not "His mighty angels," as in the Authorized Version, for the power is spoken of not as belonging to them, but as His,—these are to be the attendants of His coming. They served Him, the Son of man, on earth, being ministering attendants on His weakness. They are now to obey Him, the glorified Son of man, coming from heaven, as instruments of His power.

Another symbol of the glorified Saviour's revelation is thus given us, "In flaming fire," or rather, as some older versions have it, "in flame of fire." In all probability there ought to be a comma after this clause. It is a continuance of the description of the revelation of the Lord. He is to come in the brilliancy of flame. The shekinah-splendour, the Old Testament symbol of

the majesty of the divine presence, is thus ascribed to the advent of the divine Son of man. As when the angels announced His incarnation, "the glory of the Lord shone," in sudden deluges of light falling on the plains of Bethlehem, so at His final coming with His attendant angels. Yet it seems hardly justifiable to link this clause simply to what precedes. This flood of fire, in which the day of the Lord is to dawn, is peaceful, blessed light to His people, but it is also lurid flame to His enemies. It is a symbol of glory indeed, but it may be the symbol of the glory of the divine wrath (Dan. vii. 9, 10 ; Mal. iii. 1, 2 and iv. 1). And we know that "every man's work shall be made manifest ; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 13-15). While, therefore, the words "in flame of fire" do belong strictly to those which go before, they carry on the thought to what follows. They serve to introduce the fearful words "taking vengeance," or rather "assigning retribution." The phrase, though not uncommon elsewhere, stands alone in the New Testament. It points to the vindication of the divine glory in wrath (*ira consummationis*, not *ira consumptionis*, Augustine) falling upon Gentile and Jewish sinners alike. The Gentiles are described, as often in Scripture, as "them that know not God" (*vid.* Lect. xiii. p. 144). The knowing involves recognition of God, and the striving after communion with Him. "To know God as God is to be in vital fellowship with Him, to love Him, to fulfil that relation towards Him for which we were born" (Westcott on 1 John ii. 3). Hence such knowledge cannot be predicated of the Gentiles. There are many of their own utterances which fully acknowledge this. An old man of the Zulu tribe once said to his Christian

instructor, "When we were children it was said 'the King is in heaven;' we used constantly to hear this when we were children. They used to point to the King on high: *we did not hear His name; we heard only that the King is on high*" (Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 251). There is a strange, sad blending of knowledge and ignorance in such a declaration. These heathen do not hear about the Great King who is above for the first time when they are brought into contact with Christian teaching, and yet till that Christian teaching is received they do not know Him. Except in Christ Jesus there is no right recognition of God—no heart-knowledge of that God whose nature and whose name is Love (John xvii. 3 and 25). By those "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" are signified unbelieving Jews. Disobedience, not ignorance, is their *differentia*. Such, then, were the two classes of enemies by whom the Thessalonian Church was surrounded; but the description of them embraces all enemies of the cross of Christ. It points in its wider reference not to distinctions of race or nationality, but to moral and spiritual distinctions. We may say that it sets before us "such as have resisted and quenched the light of nature; and all, whether Gentiles or Jews, who, having heard, disobey the gospel" (Dr. Lillie, p. 447). Those to whom such a description applies (*οἱ τιμωροί*) "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." They "shall suffer punishment," as the Revised Version has it, and the punishment is specified in the appositional and expository clause, "eternal destruction." This destruction is not annihilation, for then the other words which follow would be entirely unnecessary, "from the presence of the Lord,

and from the glory of His power." Extinction of existence is in the very conception of it not only from the Lord's presence, but from every other presence. Again, the qualifying word "everlasting," rather "eternal," is added. The word has been the battlefield of much recent controversy. "Æonian" (if we transfer the original Greek into the English, and we have Tennyson's sanction for doing so) is declared to be "a word which shines only by a reflected light; though used to express continuity of existence or action, the period over which that continuity extends depends on the object with which the Æon has to do," or again, it is defined as representing that which is "endless within the sphere of its own existence," or again, as referring "to man's essential or spiritual state, and not to time either finite or infinite;" for instance, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen (*Letters*, p. 240) writes: "Eternal life is living in the love of God; eternal death is living in self; so that a man may be in eternal life or in eternal death for ten minutes, as he changes from the one state to the other." Once more, it is held by others that the word is "the expression of that condition which is to supervene upon the cessation of time." This latter definition is nearest the Biblical conception of the word. And it may be added, that in so far at least as the word itself goes, there is nothing in it to relieve the awful darkness that rests upon the description of the future doom of the wicked. The term, however, qualifying "destruction," as it here does, shows still further that that destruction is not extinction of being. It is not loss of being, but loss of well-being; for as its opposite life is more than mere existence, so destruction is more than mere non-existence. This

eternal destruction, therefore, is a state. It is soul-destruction, and its essence is separation from the Lord's presence. The figure is taken from an Oriental court: "In the light of the King's countenance is life" (Prov. xvi. 15). To be with God, to walk with Him or before Him, is true eternal life here, and all future eternal life is its completion and perfection. "In Thy presence there is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Of the glorified saints, it is said by the New Testament seer, "They shall see His face." Eternal destruction, on the other hand, is to be "anathema from Christ" (Rom. ix. 3, R. V.), "and from the glory of His power"—separation from His might, as manifested in the glory of Himself and of His saints.

This description of the future of the ungodly owes much of its force to its cumulative form. Whatever may be said of its parts, when taken as a whole it is invested with a fearful solemnity. It is altogether an unworthy treatment of it to say, as does Farrar (*Mercy and Judgment*, p. 465), that it is in almost Paul's earliest Epistle, and that he is "speaking of the second advent in a manner to which he scarcely ever—if ever—reverted in his later writings." Still worse is it to say, as he also does, that "these words were written at a moment of extreme exacerbation against the Jews of Thessalonica, and what is here denounced upon them is a punishment like that of Cain,—the *pœna damni*,—the being cut off from the presence of God—the rupture of the Old Covenant relation." We are surely not prepared to say that the apostle turned his back in later days upon his earlier teaching, or that his teaching took at any time a colouring of falsehood, or even of exaggeration or unreality, from

feelings of resentment in his breast. Besides, this "exacerbation," as he calls it, extended to the Gentile foes of the Thessalonian Church as well as to the Jewish, and with that fact alone his exposition falls to the ground. Again, this æonian exclusion is not represented, as he asserts, as taking place at the first advent (*Life of St. Paul*, i. 607). It is undoubtedly the final judgment-day which is specified. Any other view of the passage robs it of its grandeur and solemnity,—deprives the different parts of the description of most of their significance,—exhibits the various words employed as far too strong for the thought they are intended to convey. As we have already seen, to refer the day of the Lord to the day of Israel's judgment and the accompanying close of the Jewish dispensation—to the generation, that is to say, which rejected Christ, is to do violence to the whole structure of these Epistles; so, to restrict this passage to any expected pre-millennial advent is to do equal violence to it. It is surely evident on the very surface, that what is alluded to here is identical with what is described in 1 Thess. iv. 15-17. The purpose the apostle has in view in the description of the coming is in both cases the same, the giving of encouragement and comfort to his readers in the midst of apprehensions and trials. The accessories of the Lord's coming in both passages are to a large extent similar. The joy and rest of the blessed, and the destruction of the wicked, as following upon the coming, are in both places the same (1 Thess. v. 3). Except by the most violent exegetical treatment, therefore, the passages cannot be made to refer to two different comings, and the only coming in which they can receive their complete fulfilment is that final advent at the general resurrection and the judgment-

day. Whatever premonitions the world may have already seen, or may yet see, mark but stages leading on to that day "when He shall come." The certainty of the coming is emphasized, but the time thereof is alluded to indefinitely (*ὅταν*). But whenever that day of the Lord dawns, He is "to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," rather "believed." We are not to see in these clauses two aspects in which Christ's people are contemplated by the apostle. Thus Mason (*Ellicott's New Testament Commentary*) puts it, "As the persecutors were divided into two classes to be punished, so the saved are described under two aspects; in contrast with 'them that know not God' they are 'saints,' *i.e.* fully consecrated to God; in contrast with 'them that obey not the gospel' they are 'they that believed,' *i.e.* accepted the gospel. As the profane Gentiles, looking on the saints, recognise the 'glory' of the God whom they knew not, so the disobedient Jews, seeing the faithful, are aptly filled with 'wonder' before they perish, at the glory to be attained by obedience to the law of suffering." This exposition is somewhat artificial and strained. The development of the thought seems rather the following. Those who are Christ's ransomed people, in whom He is to be glorified, are "saints" in the fullest sense of the word, inasmuch as they have been "believers." Their perfected sanctification, in which their Saviour's glory is at last to be manifested, has its origin and explanation in this, that they have been believers—have been led to accept the gospel as it was offered them on earth. Their acceptance of the Saviour in time, is the ground and reason of their being His saints for evermore. His being glorified in them as His saints leads, further, to His being marvelled at in

them. Beholding the beauty of their holiness and their exaltation in the divine favour, all intelligences will wonder at the "riches of His glory" thus exhibited in His people, "the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. ix. 23). While the word "saints" specially represents them as they *are*, the word "believers" represents them as they *were*, what they had become, when the gospel was offered them: hence the parenthetic and explanatory clause following, "because our testimony among you was believed." The words do not mean, my testimony *about* you, the testimony which I bore to your patience and faith (ver. 4), will on that day be confirmed. Such a rendering is altogether forced, and void of meaning. Nor do the words signify, as in the Authorized Version, "among you." Their natural and simple meaning is, My testimony in regard to Christ Jesus and His gospel which was addressed to you, and aimed at reaching your hearts, was lovingly accepted by you. The apostle contemplates this fact with a holy joy. He feels that he himself has a personal interest in the Saviour's final glorification in His saints. They are to be Christ's saints in virtue of their acceptance of the gospel, and that gospel he had been the chosen instrument of proclaiming to them. He is therefore no uninterested party in the scene which he is describing. He had said in his earlier Epistle (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20), "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." It is the same exuberance of gladness which breathes in the words, "because our testimony unto you was believed." The whole passage, further, is apparently a reminiscence of our

Lord's own words,—they may well have been known to Paul, though John's Gospel which records them had not yet been written,—“All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and *I am glorified in them*” (John xvii. 10). He rejoices that the utterance of that high-priestly prayer is to have its fulfilment in his Thessalonian converts. His own heart-joy is bound up in His Master's glorification in them, “in that day.” The clause, in the position assigned to it, marks out “that day” as very emphatic. It was the day which the apostle had often spoken about when he was with them—the day to be much feared, and yet much longed for—

“Day of eternal gain for world's loss,
Day of eternal loss for worldly gain.”

Ver. 11, “wherefore,” rather, whereunto, to which end, with a view towards such a glorifying of Christ Jesus in His saints, and the sharing therein by the Thessalonian believers, “also we,” that is, we not only wish and hope, but also “pray,” and that, too, “always.” The word is characteristic of Paul, and it is no utterance of enthusiastic hyperbole; his intercessory prayer was a constant habit of mind and heart. “For you, that our God,” my God and yours, “would count you worthy of *this* calling.” The word “this” is not a happy rendering. The reference is not to this calling on that day, but to the calling they had already received and obeyed. It is therefore “your calling,” or His calling of you. It is the calling, on its earthly side, to toil and suffering, and on its heavenly, to glory, “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” While the word “count” is not to be explained away by understanding it as simply

meaning to make, (“dignos efficiat,” Bengel,) it yet, in the very nature of the case, includes that meaning. The two ideas blend almost into one. The word, describing as it does the action of the divine mind and heart towards believers, implies necessarily both.

The clauses following show how this counting and making worthy is to be accomplished, “and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness.” Although among recent commentators Bishop Alexander (*Speaker's Commentary*) and Canon Mason (*Ellicott's New Testament Commentary for English Readers*) hold substantially by the Authorized Version, the weight of authority is decidedly against it. There are structural objections to the rendering which makes “the good pleasure” to be God's. It is rather His people's moral goodness, and their good pleasure in it—every aspiration after goodness which they cherish within their breasts. Hence the Revised Version is to be preferred, “every desire of goodness.” Believers are good, not from a sense of duty merely, but from a true heart-relish for goodness. They not only walk, but they also “sing in the ways of the Lord” (Ps. cxxxviii. 5). They delight in His laws, saying with David, and a greater than David, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart.” All genuine holiness therefore being a cheerful obedience to God's law, is indeed the good pleasure of His will; but it is also on the part of His people their “good pleasure of goodness,” and it is this which is signified here. The apostle's prayer is that his friends may have by God's grace every desire after holiness brought to perfect realization, so that they may become “full of goodness” (Rom. xv. 14), finding at last their perfect happiness in perfect sanctification.

He adds, "and the work of faith." This, too, is to be fulfilled "with power," in order that they may be counted worthy of their calling. "The work of faith" is not God's work, not His work of grace, carried on within the heart, but "every work of faith"—every action which is the outcome of faith—every work which is prompted and carried on by faith, for work is that which manifests the existence of faith as "flowers are the animate spring-tide." Possibly the first clause gives prominence to the inner aspect of the Christian life, the second to the outer; thus together they represent holiness of heart and life—that holiness which is the foretaste and the pledge of their being at last the saints in whom the Saviour is to be glorified "in that day."

Ver. 12, "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him." Such is the aim of all holiness both here and hereafter. The Saviour's *name* is glorified in His people's conversion,—their turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God,—in their joyful alacrity of present service, in their final bliss in heaven. But this is not all, or rather this truth is put in another way, so as to bring out the relation of friendship in which they stand to Him. "The goods of friends are common," as the old adage has it, and it has its meaning in the closest of all friendships, the communion existing between Christ and His people. They, too, are to be glorified in Him. But in this case it is not their *name*, it is their *nature* renewed, and made like unto His. They are glorified in Him, in possessing His likeness, enjoying His protection, sharing at last in the sovereignty of His throne. In a far different way will He be glorified in those who are His enemies. Hence the closing

words, “according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In the one case it will be a reaping of “the due reward of their deeds,”—“the wages of sin is death.” In the other case it is all of grace. Merit there is none. It is all of God’s favour to His people that His Son is to be glorified in them.

LECTURE XXIV.

'Th hostility to the truth will never rise higher than just when it is on the brink of being for ever vanquished. An advancing tide of seduction and increasing apostasy is to be looked for, which shall manifest itself in pseudo-Prophetism and systematic anti-Christianity. It will become more and more apparent, that the world in the depth of its heart wills not the Deliverer provided for it by God, and who meantime is on the way to come again as its Judge. Hence increasing indifference, the nearer the time of decision arrives; and obdurate impenitence even in the midst of the most terrible judgments. So great a sin must indeed be punished with new sin, and yet greater misery.'

VAN OOSTERZEE, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 796.

“Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is *now* present: let no man beguile you in any wise; for *it will not be*, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.”—2 THESS. ii. 1-4.

WE have now reached one of the most difficult and perplexing passages in the whole range of the Pauline Epistles—a passage which, though it is far from being Pauline in thought and phraseology, is undoubtedly genuine. So soon as we enter into its investigation, we feel that we are in danger of wandering bewildered in a whole thicket of contradictory opinions. After our best efforts have been expended in getting disentangled therefrom, we feel that we have reached no ground on which we can surely advance. It may be too much to say, with Farrar, that “this

passage must be ranked with the very few others in the New Testament which must remain to us in the condition of insoluble enigmas" (*St. Paul*, i. p. 613); but it is not too much to say that in regard to the whole question involved—

"Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub judice lis est."

It is not within the scope of these lectures to discuss it in all its aspects. Such a discussion would lead us into many other parts both of Old and New Testament Scripture, and would draw us aside from the purely expository and practical aim we have in view. It is sufficient for our purpose that we try to mark intelligently the clauses as they follow one another, and at the close to gather up the hints they give as to the right solution.

The first part of this second Epistle aims at widening the view of the Thessalonian converts into the future—the future bliss of believers, the future doom of the rebellious. The second part, embraced in this chapter, seeks to guard them beforehand against delusion as to the nearness of that future, and the mischief which the cherishing of such delusion would produce. The apostle wishes them to be forearmed by being forewarned. His chief design is to impress upon their minds the one truth, that the proper attitude to be assumed towards the day of the Lord is that not of idle curiosity, but of stedfast and untroubled faith. Hence he turns from the theme of future glory, with its dark background of doom, to the realities of the present; and from words of tenderest encouragement to words of no less tender caution. So, in listening to his cautions and directions, would they be safe amid dangers encompassing them, both of doctrine and of practice.

“Now we beseech you, brethren.” His heart being filled with earnest anxiety regarding them, his exhortation naturally takes the form of entreaty. He appears almost as a suppliant before his brethren. “By the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him;” it is no mere formula of solemn adjuration this. “By” is rather “on behalf of” (ὕπέρ). He pleads with them in regard to, and in the interests of, the Lord’s advent. It had been misunderstood and misrepresented, and he will now reassert and vindicate right views regarding it. With the unconscious wisdom of a loving nature, too, the apostle makes his appeal by emphasizing that aspect of the advent which had most interest for the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iv. 17), and afforded the most pathetic way of reaching their hearts,—the gathering together of all the Lord’s people to Himself,—the meeting with Him in the air, appointed alike for all those who have been laid to sleep in death, and for those who are then alive and remaining,—the gathering together of both classes, and their being as one united company for ever with Him. The suggestive word “gathering together” (ἐπισυναγωγή) is found only in one other place in the New Testament, Heb. x. 25, “the assembling of ourselves together” (but see Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34). The reference is there obviously to meeting for public worship in Christ’s name, and with the gracious aids of His Spirit; so in like manner this final congregating of His saints is to Him, and for the praise of His glory.

The apostle’s entreaty, thus lovingly prefaced, is “that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled.” His purpose is to guard them against being unsettled, “quickly,” either so soon after he had left them, or after they had been instructed about the day of the

Lord, or better, quickly, in the sense of suddenly, lightly, easily. There lies a maritime figure in the word "shaken." Wordsworth well paraphrases it thus, "In order that you may not be soon shaken off from the anchorage of your firmly settled mind, and be drifted about by winds of false doctrine, as a ship in your harbour at Thessalonica is shaken off from its moorings by the surge of the sea." They are warned against being driven out of their ordinary state of mental composure — shaken out of their sanctified common sense ("vous das besonnene Bewusstsein, im Unterschied von der Begeisterung und Aufregung," Immer's *Hermeneutik des N. T.* p. 206). "Thrown off their balance" is what we might say; "or be troubled:" the clause has a slightly climactic force—thrown into a state of unreasoning and frenzied confusion. We have to remember that in exactly the same connection of thought our Lord Himself had guarded His disciples against such agitation, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: *see that ye be not troubled*: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (Matt. xxiv. 6).

The apostle proceeds to point out three ways in which his converts were in danger of being deceived and so troubled, and in doing so he is clearly alluding not to what possibly might happen, but to what was already actually taking place. A fanatical spirit had insinuated itself into their midst, and, as in all such cases, fraud was sure to follow closely on its footsteps. (a) "Neither by spirit." Prophetic voices had been heard in their church assemblies, utterances which professed to come from those who had the gift of prophecy. These utterances had to be tried, for they might be full of error. In regard to these they had

already been enjoined, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). (b) "Nor by word." We are not to understand by this any rumour that might be gaining currency, or any reckoning as to the times and seasons which men might make. Nor are we to regard it as some unwritten saying supposed to have fallen from the lips of the Saviour Himself during His earthly ministry, or any oral message asserted to have come from His apostle. It is far more natural to explain the "word" as simply the ordinary teaching in the church, as opposed to the prophetic spirit on the one hand, which was accompanied by ecstatic rapture, and to an epistle, or any written document, on the other. It would thus seem that unscrupulous or at least fanatical men, belonging to the church, or getting a footing in it, were busy in misleading and so troubling believers. (c) "Nor by letter as from us." The qualifying clause, "as from us," is not to be connected with all the three preceding terms, as *e.g.* Webster and Wilkinson, "as a caution and protest against deducing incorrect and alarming apprehensions on the subject from anything *revealed, spoken, or written* by him," for at all events "as from us" could not apply to the spirit. The spirit, as of the absent Paul, could not have been feigned. The manifestation must have been present in his own person in their midst. Then as to connecting "as from us" with the "word," there is a good deal to be advanced in favour of it, especially the close joining of "word" and "epistle" in ver. 15. But it is legitimate to say, that if it cannot reasonably be attached to the first, so it should not be to the second. That is to say, it is to be restricted solely to the third, the "letter." What then is the meaning of "letter as from us"? It is

strongly held by some (notably Dr. Jowett) that it refers to a misconception of Paul's former Epistle. But the weight of argument, and also of authority, is against this view. Actual fictitious letters are hinted at in chap. iii. 17, "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle : so I write," loses much of its significance if it be otherwise explained. False or fanatical brethren had made such letters current in the Thessalonian community. Nor is this so very extraordinary. Literary forgeries of this kind, meant as a *pia fraus*, were not uncommon at that time, and the offence, daring as it was, is somewhat softened to our view when we reflect that Paul's letters, while they had authority, were not yet invested with all the sanctity with which we now rightly regard them. It is quite conceivable, then, that there were some who thought they were serving a good purpose, one that Paul himself had at heart, in circulating, perhaps anonymously, as a representation of Pauline teaching, letters which, as they thought, cleared up the obscurities of his instruction. If this be the correct view, it explains why upon the whole the apostle passes over the wrong thus done to himself and the truth so lightly—with so little of indignant reproof. At all events, it seems clear that unless there had been in existence some such spurious letter, he would hardly have alluded to the mere possibility of one afterwards being composed and circulated.

We turn now to the particular point of this erroneous and disquieting teaching. It was "as that the day of Christ is at hand." The Revised Version must certainly be substituted here, "as that the day of the Lord is now present." The question of the advent, so constantly and keenly discussed by the Thessalonians, had

in the short interval between the writing of the two Epistles apparently assumed a new phase. In the first, the widespread anxiety was chiefly regarding the share which the departed were to have in it. In the second, the question appears to have reached a new stage; it was feared that the day had actually come—that it had dawned upon them, and that they did not all know it. The believers in that city were quite familiar with the idea of the nearness of Christ's coming, and they were not alarmed by the thought; rather, as the children of light, they were longing for that day. But it was another thing to think that the day had already come upon them unawares. And this is what the word in New Testament usage throughout, and elsewhere, distinctly means, "is now present." Dr. Eadie well suggests that the phrase, "the day of the Lord," may be somewhat wide in its significance, embracing incidents which are to precede as well as accompany the advent proper. If this be so, then the persecutions, which had apparently been first renewed in Thessalonica (2 Thess. i. 4), may have led the Church to suppose that the day of judgment had actually arrived, although the Saviour Himself, in the glory of His presence, had not yet come. This view is all the more likely, as the stealthiness of His approach had been clearly announced to them, "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." "Their error was changing the warning of true prophecy, caught from the lips of Christ Himself (1 Thess. v. 3), into the fanatical cry, 'The day of the Lord is on us'" (Alexander, *Speaker's Commentary*. The distinction is to be noticed between ἐφίσταται and ἐνέστηκεν).

Ver. 3, "Let no man deceive you by any means," or rather, as the Revised Version has it, "Let no man

beguile you in any wise." The exhortation is put in the most general form, so as to comprehend every conceivable mode of misguiding. Reverting for a moment to the three modes which have been specified, we may say that, so far as concerns our times, we are exposed to danger only from the middle one—that is to say, from misleading teaching of men of enthusiastic and ill-balanced minds. Ever and anon, as one generation follows another, the cry has been heard, "Lo, here is Christ, or there;" and many, beguiled and disturbed, and at last disappointed thereby, have suffered seriously in their spiritual life. Even Luther, with all his sobriety and strength of character, allowing his views as to "the last things" to receive the tinge of his own gloomy surroundings, has said (Fischreden, *vid.* Froude's art. on Luther, *Contemp. Review*, Aug. 1883), "The thread is unravelled out, and we are now visible as the fringe. The present age is like the last withered apple hanging on the tree. Daniel's four empires—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—are gone. The Roman Reichlingers exist; but it is the St. John's drink (the stirrup-cup), and they are fast departing. Signs in the heaven foretell the end. On earth there is building and planting and gathering of money. The arts are growing as if there was to be a new start, and the world was to become young again. I hope God will finish with it. We have come already to the white horse. Another hundred years, and all will be over. The gospel is despised. God's word will disappear for want of any to preach it. Mankind will turn into epicureans, and care for nothing. They will not believe that God exists. Then the voice will be heard, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!'" This characteristic utterance of the Reformer, to be under-

stood probably, not as a deliberative and authoritative expression of opinion, but rather as the reflexion of a passing mood, is yet eminently illustrative of what the apostle means here by "word" tending to mislead. The Reformation—the birthday of a new world—was indeed a coming of the Lord, just as was the destruction of Jerusalem, with the obliteration of the temple and its worship. These were preludes, and there may be many others, of the advent; but "the end is not yet." Upheavals, social, political, and religious, visionaries may mistake as the goal, but they are only stages leading up to it. Hence the Saviour Himself says, "Go not forth; believe them not." The spirit of restless eschatological excitement meets, sooner or later, only with disappointment. It brings with it no increase of joyful hopefulness; it rather ministers ultimately to the service of the world. Hence in connection with this very theme our Lord has said (Luke xxi. 19), "In your patience possess ye your souls," that is, make and keep your souls your own. Whatever be the value of apocalyptic study, it must ever, as these Epistles themselves so strikingly illustrate, find its balancing and regulating principle in the study of Christian ethics, and in the homage of Christian work.

And now the section which embraces the prophecy properly begins; and, as the Authorized Version leaves some points obscure, or at least throws them out of their prominence, we shall adopt the Revised reading. The day of the Lord will not be, "except the falling away come first." There is set before us here not a general indifference, but a fearful and widespread defection, a "departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12). *The* apostasy it is called, that which the apostle had freely

spoken to the Thessalonians about when he had been with them; and perhaps, also, the definite article suggests a reference to what our Lord Himself had said. We read in the Gospel of Luke, and, as we have seen, that Gospel may have been even thus early in their hands — “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke xviii. 8, compare Matt. xxiv. 10-12). Chrysostom curiously says, “He calls Antichrist himself the apostasy, as being about to destroy many, and make them fall away.” But obviously this apostasy is rather that which is simply to precede and usher in the revelation of the great apostate himself — “the man of sin.” He is described not as an ideal, but as a historical personage — the man who is regarded as the very embodiment of all evil — the hideous consummation and manifestation of all that sin can make man. He is to be “revealed.” Like Christ, whom he opposes, he is, by having an apocalypse, to be His caricature. Hence he is also “the son of perdition.” This fearful title our Lord had assigned to Judas (John xvii. 12), and Judas, in his apostasy from the discipleship, is thus a type of the coming apostate. The title (*vid.* Son of death, 2 Sam. xii. 5, in the original) points him out as one worthy of death, and doomed to it. The perdition is very clearly that which is to be meted out to himself, not that which, by his instrumentality, he is to bring upon others.

Thus far he is set forth in his inmost nature. Depravity is in him personified. Now in ver. 4 we are shown how he is to act. “He that opposeth;” his mode of working is to be active opposition to the human race indeed, but directly and avowedly to God and His Christ. In the arrogance of his profanity, he

is in every way, by himself and through others, to be the adversary ("Effert se corde, lingua, stilo, factis, per se, per suos," Bengel). "And exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped." The haughty exaltation of spiritual pride—"spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12)—is implied. The worship of the true God, and all forms of so-called worship whatever, he is to rise up against (not, above), and yet in the very act he is to claim all worship for himself, "So that he sitteth in the temple of God." By a deliberate and presumptuous act of intrusion, he is to enter into the very habitation of God (*ναός*), and set himself in God's place, claiming men's homage as himself a divine ruler. This sanctuary or inmost shrine, in which he is to take his seat, is not to be explained with rigid literalness as referring to the temple of Jerusalem, either as still standing at the time when the prophecy is fulfilled, or as actually to be restored by Antichrist himself. Prophetic language cannot be treated in this prosaic way. Following a not unfamiliar Pauline usage (Eph. ii. 21; 1 Cor. iii. 17, vi. 19), we must regard it as representing the Church of Christ—not any material structure, such as St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, but the universal company of professed believers. The last trait in the picture is, "setting himself forth as God." The word employed suggests a public displaying of himself after an official and formal designation. A clear indication seems to lie in this, that the passage describes no purely atheistic manifestation, but the claim put forward by an impostor *within the Church* to the adoration which is due to God alone. It is the act of one who, while he is, as never man was before, the representative of evil, represents himself in his own

person and deeds as the individual manifestation of divine power and grace.

Such is the awful picture. Its fearful hideousness cannot easily be softened. Jowett indeed says, "We are not to imagine a person suddenly coming forward and claiming divine honours. This would be, not a mystery of iniquity, but an absurdity. What the apostle is speaking of is a form of evil springing out of the state of the world itself, to which mankind are ready to give homage." But it is not in any way denied that this personage is "a form of evil;" it is only held that he is more than a form, and the whole language asserts this. Nor is it denied that his appearance will spring "out of the state of the world itself." So far, indeed, his coming will not be "sudden." The "falling away first" prepares for it. While as to this view being the representation of "an absurdity," it has to be noticed that all sin is more or less an absurdity—Scripture always speaks of sin as folly; and the more pronounced and heinous it is, it answers to that description all the better. And may we not say, without anticipating our exposition, that the world has already seen some profane absurdities almost approaching this description in their madness and blasphemy, and appearing at least as forerunners of the crowning wickedness which is yet to come?

LECTURE XXV.

*"But whom Thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on
Thy terrors, as I put Thy mildness on,
Image of Thee in all things."*

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, vi. 734.

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work; only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming; even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 THESS. ii. 5-12.

WE address ourselves now to the second section of this mysterious passage: "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" With a slight undertone of reproof in the interrogative form of the words, the apostle reminds his friends that they had suffered themselves through forgetfulness to fall into a state of disquietude. "When I was yet with you," he says. He drops out the names of Silvanus and Timotheus, so intent is he in recalling his own personal teaching; so eager is he, further, in showing that his teaching had undergone no modification or change. He had in the past kept telling them these things (*ἐλεγον*), and he

reiterates them now. "And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season." The "now" has been much discussed. It is used here not in its temporal sense, "Now when ye recall my oral instruction ye know" (Riggenbach), but simply for the purpose of logical sequence and transition—"And now to pass on to another point" (Lünemann). But here we feel that what was matter of knowledge to them, is at best only matter of conjecture to us. Indeed, Dr. Eadie is right in saying, "because they knew it so well, we know it so imperfectly." This at least is clear, it is not the coming of Christ, but the revelation of the counter-Christ which this restraining power holds back. That which withholds, further, cannot be conceived as being the prayers of God's people. There would be no meaning in speaking of these in so enigmatical a way. Nor can it be the apostle's own labours. The same objection, not to speak of others, applies to this view. Nor can the restraining power be regarded as God Himself. The clause, "Until he be taken out of the way," however capable of meaning a voluntary withdrawal, can hardly be applied to Him: at least, as so implied, it would be somewhat harsh and startling. The most common explanation, one that was generally accepted in the earliest times, of this restraining influence, is that it is the Roman Empire in the first place, and in the second place all legally constituted authority, of which, for so many ages, that empire was the embodiment and symbol. This view explains the manifest reticence of the apostle in the allusion. By word of mouth he had previously mentioned Imperial Rome by name. In the circle of his friends he had not been afraid to do so. But it was otherwise

in a letter which would continue to be read in public assemblies. Any word which could be construed into implying that the Roman power was yet to be extinguished would have been imprudent, and even dangerous. The imperial coins bore the legend, "*Romæ æternæ*," and the national poet had represented the father of gods and men as saying, "*Imperium sine fine dedi*" (Virg. *Æn.* i. 279). The apostle was too wise, therefore, needlessly to raise the suspicions of this unbounded national pride. Chrysostom says, "Because he said this of the Roman Empire, he naturally glanced at it, and for the present speaks covertly and darkly. For he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities and useless dangers. For if he had said that after a little while the Roman Empire would be dissolved, they would now immediately have even overwhelmed him as a pestilent person, and all the faithful as living and warring to this end." But we may also say that the very indefiniteness of the allusion has been overruled by an ever-watchful and ever-guiding providence to include, or at least to suggest as a further meaning, the essence of the imperial power, after that power had itself succumbed; all God-appointed civil rule, whether as swayed by the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages and of recent times, or as constituted in many different forms in the future history of the world. It may be objected to this exposition that the heathen Roman power in Paul's days and afterwards, proved to be mainly on the side of evil rather than a restraint upon it. So far, indeed, this is undeniable. Yet the apostle himself had claimed and experienced its protection. It had shielded him once and again from Jewish and Gentile malignity; and, in so far as it

embodied the principle of order and legality, it ever received the homage of Christian respect and submission (Rom. xiii. 1 ff.; 1 Tim. ii. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 13 ff.), and the benefit of Christian prayers. There is thus nothing to prevent us regarding it, as it here seems to be regarded, as the strong breastwork that served, and in other forms would yet serve, to keep back the surging tide of iniquity. But why in ver. 7 is "that which restraineth" changed into "one that restraineth"? Why is it both a thing and a person? In the one case it is contemplated, in the abstract, as a system; in the other, in the concrete, as personified; and human government is, in the nature of things, both. The system is always centred in an individual. The objection of Döllinger, therefore, that if a long line of rulers is pointed out the masculine-plural would be needed, falls to the ground (*vid.* Döllinger, *Christenthum und Kirche*, p. 452). When, therefore, all forms of civil rule come to be losing their hold upon men, and to be dissolved in utter lawlessness (and it is implied that such a state of matters is at last to come round), then the apocalypse of the man of sin will take place. He will come "in his own season,"—the time fixed by divine foreknowledge and decree. Christ's coming is to be in "the fulness of the times," and so also shall it be of the advent of the false semblance of Him—His adversary.

Ver. 7 is explanatory and confirmatory of the preceding, "For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work"—not the inconceivably monstrous lawlessness, as some render it, for "the mystery" is in contrast with "the revelation," but the mystery which has lawlessness as its distinctive and essential feature. It is not Antichrist himself, but the vast mass of moral and

social disorder, which the apostle saw too plainly was already seething in the ancient Roman world, and beginning to leaven even the Church. The Epistles themselves are ample evidence that even within that consecrated company such destructive elements were at work. The arch-enemy of the race then, the man of sin, could not appear until this cancerous evil, this

“Foul sin, gathering head,
Should break into corruption.”

Men's minds, in other words, must, by the enormity of the sins of the time, be prepared to receive him. In this sense the counterfeit Christ will be the product of his age, the representative of it, and also its scourge. We are thus led to regard all defections from the truth, and their accompanying decay of morals, as anticipatory antichrists—indications of his approach.

Ver. 8, “And then”—the delay is only until “He that now restraineth be taken out of the way,”—how, is left entirely undefined—“shall be revealed the lawless one” (*Exlex ille*, Vorstius). “Law in all its manifestations is that which he shall rage against, making hideous misapplication of that great truth, that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (*Trench, Hulsean Lectures*, p. 136). The Gnostics, it is to be observed, of the apostolic age had exhibited a good deal of that tendency already. And now in words which, in their ecstatic elevation, fall upon the ear with something of the measured rhythm of Hebrew parallelism, his ultimate fate is declared—“Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming.” Being “the son of perdition,” he is to be made powerless, abolished, destroyed. “The breath

of His mouth," the instrument of this destruction, is not, as some ancient expositors hold, the Holy Spirit; nor is it the preaching of the gospel—"The sword of My mouth," as the risen and glorified Saviour called it (Rev. ii. 16)—"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," strong to fight against and overcome every obstacle—even the man of sin himself. The words are rather a figurative way of announcing the ease with which the righteous wrath of the divine Son of man consumes the adversary. He but breathes and it is done. Isa. xi. 4 presents a striking parallel, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." "The manifestation" (the glorious brightness of it is included) of His coming (or His presence)—the first dawning of that day will be consuming, for it is the fire of "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. iii. 7-12).

Ver. 9. The apostle turns once more to the description of this fearful enemy of God and man. Having just depicted his overthrow, and his words are a kind of rhetorical justification of that overthrow, he goes on to say, "*Even he*, whose coming (or presence) is according to the working of Satan." The climax is, that it is a coming directly in the power of the evil one. As such it is in the display of false works—"With all power and signs and lying wonders." Riegenbach well distinguishes the terms thus: "Power denotes the root of the operations; signs, the works in their significance, as indicating the divinity of him who performs them—here of course deceptive; lastly, lying wonders, the marvellousness of these indications." The word "lying" implies that all have falsehood as their origin and end, and tacitly serves to set them

over against Christ's miracles—the works of Him whom Peter, on the day of Pentecost, announced to his countrymen as “a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs.” The lying works of the man of sin further resemble those of the false Christs and prophets who are his forerunners, “There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. xxiv. 24).

Ver. 10, “And with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing”—with the employment of every conceivable kind of wickedness, having its root in fraud. The victims of such Satanic delusions, the willing votaries of Antichrist, are, as belonging to “the son of perdition,” described as “they that are perishing,” in contrast with those who, as being in Christ Jesus, and belonging to Him, are “such as are being saved” (Acts ii. 47). Why they are perishing is explained in the words which follow, “Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” The Thessalonians had received the word “with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Thess. i. 6 and 2 Thess. ii. 13); there may be a commendation of them implied in this representation of those who reject the gospel. “The love of the truth” cannot be, as some Greek Fathers assert, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, nor is it simply to be regarded as synonymous with the truth. It indicates the state of mind and heart, which is itself a divine gift to be received in order that the truth may become possessed. *This* they put from them. *Theirs* is not “the belief of the truth” (ver. 13), because they refuse to have “the love of the truth.” They will not have any

heart-affinity with it. They are "haters of God" (Rom. i. 30). It is further to be noticed that truth does not stand here in direct opposition to deceit or error, but rather to unrighteousness. It means therefore the truth, in the signification of the word so characteristic of John's writings,—the gospel of Christ Jesus, in all its ethical elements, touching every part of human nature, abiding in the heart and transfiguring the life. Those who are perishing are so described, because they are under the influence of that which is the opposite of the truth as thus explained—they are under the dominion of error, and the moral corruption which belongs to it.

Ver. 11, "And for this cause," judicial infatuation follows upon wilful perversity and obstinate unbelief—"God sendeth;"—not "shall send," as the Authorized Version has it; still less, "permits to be sent," as some would explain it, but "sends." It has the full force of the vivid prophetic present ("die Sache als gegenwärtige gedacht," De Wette), "A working of error"—a working in them which issues in the increasing destructive power of error; the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is the parallel which suggests itself. It lies in the nature of God's moral government,—in the moral constitution of man, that sin, indulged, weakens the strength of resistance, and so invites and prepares the way for the more frequent and violent assaults of temptation. Thus yielding to sin receives at last its punishment in the slavery of sin. This "working of error" has its aim in this, "that they should believe a lie." Probably "*the* lie" is what is indicated, as opposed to the truth which has just been alluded to. Man must believe something—if not the truth, with all the blessings which its reception brings,

then the lie of the devil—the lie of Antichrist at last, with the doom which is pronounced upon it. “That they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (*κρίνεσθαι*, not *κατακρίνεσθαι*). The word “judged,” in the nature of the case, declares the judgment of doom. Unlike the Thessalonian believers who had “every desire of goodness”—who had their pleasure in goodness, and their desires ever reaching forth towards its increase (2 Thess. i. 11), these unbelievers have their pleasure in evil. They have individually said to it, “Be thou my good.” Hence with “the son of perdition,” whose adherents they are, their end is destruction.

Such is the picture presented in these few mysterious verses of the man of sin and his followers, their ways and their end. Can we fix down the description to any one definite system or person? or ought we simply to say, with Augustine, that we must remain in total ignorance as to the apostle’s meaning? Between these two extremes we may occupy a middle position. We may reasonably attain to something that is a little better at least than entire uncertainty. In discussing a theme of this kind, however, a caution against the difficulties and dangers of prophetic interpretation is ever needed. In Newman’s well-known and somewhat celebrated essay, “The Protestant idea of Antichrist,” an essay which, however interesting, is disfigured by much special pleading, and is of no value as a contribution to the exegesis of this passage, there are the following wise words of caution, which may well be pondered in connection with this subject,—“Creeds are restraints upon divines, and safeguards to readers, in point of doctrine; moral sense in questions of duty;

the text of Scripture itself in direct exposition and comment; the existing form and establishment of religion in matters of discipline and polity; but who shall warrant, and who shall verify, discussions which embrace on the one hand the wide range of history, and necessarily plunge on the other into the subtleties of allegory and poetry, which profess to connect and adjust a field so fertile in facts with a page so recondite in character, and that upon no principle, perhaps, but such as approve themselves to the judgment of the individual interpreter? What a temptation is there under such circumstances for unconscious management of the historical materials!" Acknowledging the full force of such a caution as this, let us glance, and we can do little more than glance, at this very difficult question.

We have assumed throughout that the theory must be set aside which declares these words to have been long ago fulfilled. It would in no sense be either easy or useful to trace this view through its many varieties and intricacies. It is enough to say that the passage presents to us no mere allegory, refusing to be minutely scanned. It is no mere poetical portraiture of evil, the outcome of the apostle's own desponding mood—a morbid anticipation of impending evil born of his own personal trials and contendings, and of his contemplation of what he everywhere saw around him. Nor can it be regarded as simply the product of his Jewish training, and especially of his misapprehension of the nature of Daniel's prophecies, though undeniably his language does receive much of its colouring from that source (Dan. viii. and xi.). The description is far too minute and specific to be thus explained away.

Nor is the question to be solved by supposing the words to be descriptive of a growing tendency, which the apostle may have noticed in the Church, to fall back into the beggarly elements of Judaism, or to be seduced by any grotesque manifestation of the Judaistic spirit which might take place before the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, or to be corrupted by the leavening of a semi-heathen Gnosticism. The several clauses refuse to fit into such a theory.

It is equally impossible to accept another and well-supported view, that the man of sin can be found in one or other of the Roman emperors, which of them it matters little to decide. It is indeed not unreasonable to conclude that one of these may have been before the apostle's inner eye while he wrote. This is all the more likely when we remember that emperor-worship, the climax of the imperial system, was now assuming most portentous prominence. The emperor, because he was the possessor of power, had his character invested with sacredness. His superhuman character was acknowledged by the popular mind, and the mass of men were not afraid to recognise it as a definite object of worship (*vid.* Dr. Westcott's essay, "The Two Empires; the Church and the World," in his *Commentary on the Epistles of St. John*). Still the conditions of the problem remain unsatisfied, unless we look far beyond this. We need not hesitate to affirm that the apostle was guided by the Holy Spirit, and being thus guided, prophesied, and that his prophecy yet awaits fulfilment. In what direction then does the prophetic finger point? Not to a system of infidelity, at least not to a system that is pre-eminently or exclusively so. Such a system would be no mystery, but an open thing, and cannot readily be conceived as all through its course centred

in one individual. The whole description indicates some system which is largely ecclesiastical, as the sphere in which the lawless one—the “homo delinquentiæ,” as Tertullian calls him—is to appear. The Crusaders very naturally thought, as did also many in the Eastern Church, of Mahomet. The Protestants just as naturally thought, and think still, of Romanism and the Pope. Newman makes light of this latter view, chiefly on the ground that it took its rise among the heresies of the Albigenses, and that the Waldenses did their best to foster and spread it. But even granting to it this origin, its accuracy is not on that account disproved. And there is quite sufficient evidence that even within the bosom of the Roman Church itself this interpretation was occasionally mooted, and found considerable currency. Even bishops of the Church in Belgium in the year 860, in a fierce controversy with the Bishop of Rome, used epithets in a letter which almost directly charge him as the Antichrist. (For this and other evidence of a similar kind, *vid.* Heubner, *Erklärung des N. T. in loc.*) The Reformers almost unanimously held this opinion as a fundamental article of their Protestantism. Luther did not doubt it, and still more emphatically do his immediate followers assert it. The enormous collection of hymns and popular songs which belong to the Reformation period is the most interesting evidence and illustration of this. Especially in the songs and poems which sprang into existence and immense popular favour immediately after Luther's death, and which with their distinctly polemical purpose afford so vivid a picture of the general religious feeling, the Church of Rome and its head are with marvellous variety of expression, but with equally marvellous

consensus of opinion, pronounced to be Antichrist, the counter-God and counter-Christ—the man of sin—the son of perdition (*vid.* the large collection of such verses in Wackernagel's *Das Deutsche Kirchenlied*, iii.). The English Reformation presents to us the same general agreement as to this view. Bishop Jewel sets himself elaborately to prove it, and supplies much startling evidence in its support. Sir Matthew Hale, the distinguished lawyer of the Commonwealth period, when once asked whether he was certain that this passage referred to the Pope, replied, “Were these verses inserted in ‘the Hue and Cry’ as a writ to be executed, I should certainly go straight to Rome to find him.” This is the current, or at least the popular, opinion still in all Protestant communities. When, for instance, the Emperor of Germany in August 1873 received a letter from the Vatican, claiming on the part of Pope Pius IX. the right, in virtue of their baptism, over the emperor and his people, to reprove and instruct, and even condemn, the indignant answer was the republication in fac-simile, along with the emperor's noble reply, of Luther's *Passional of Christ and Antichrist*, with the woodcut illustrations of Lucas Cranach the elder. That little book, with its passages of Scripture on the one hand and its extracts from Popish Bulls on the other, accompanied with pictorial representations which, however rude, appealed to the popular taste and feeling, and exhibiting the Pope and his worldly pomp as in every way the opponent and caricature of Christ and His passion, was welcomed with general acclamation. Times indeed had changed, but the spirit of the old Reformation days had not died.

The points in which the identification is held to be complete are well known. They are undeniably

striking. As they have been drawn up in order, especially by Bishop Wordsworth, even those who take a different view have felt constrained to acknowledge that the indictment is a telling one. The prominent errors in the Church of Rome—the gradual growth of these from principles and practices which can be traced in their germ to the very earliest Christian times—the gathering together of the power and authority of that Church into one head—the development of error in doctrine and practice manifesting itself when the power of Imperial Rome had been taken out of the way—the despotic pride and pomp which cling to that Church as prominent characteristics—its assumption of claims and titles which savour of profanity—the imposture which, in lying wonders, is so conspicuous in that Church (*vid.* Wordsworth, and Webster and Wilkinson *in loc.*),—all these have often been marshalled in order, so as to appear a long line of evidence which cannot be broken. None the less it is to be observed, and more candidly acknowledged than it often is, that there are aspects of the case which this explanation by no means fits. It would be the spirit of Antichrist itself at work were we to deny the many elements of true Christianity in the Church of Rome. Of course it is affirmed that it is only what is evil in the system which it is sought to identify with the man of sin. But the evil, great as it is, is not so sufficiently pronounced and acknowledged that we are shut up to despair as to the ultimate triumph of the good over it. Reformation is not altogether a view of the matter which it is impossible to contemplate. Besides, even the corrupt elements in Romanism do not in all respects correspond with the clauses of this passage. In some respects they are of a very opposite kind.

Still more apparent is the opposition between the errors of Rome and the errors ascribed to the antichrists in the First Epistle of John. In that Epistle the essence of antichristian character lies in the denial that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," whereas in the Church of Rome that doctrine has been specially emphasized, and, if we take the false doctrine of transubstantiation into account, has even been pushed into most disastrous and destructive error.

While, therefore, so much of obscurity rests upon this passage—obscurity which *must* rest upon it if it be indeed prophetic at all, it is prudent to accept our state of necessary ignorance, and to go no farther than to say that this colossal figure of evil appears not yet to have come. In all persecutions and heresies of the past, in all corruptions of "the simplicity that is in Christ"—in all upheavals of human society, past, present, and future, in all defections from the truth and assertions of the false, we can see "the falling away" which is first to come, and so we can thus hear the faint footfalls of his approach. But his apocalypse is not yet. He may be an occupant of the Roman see, if the good in that Church ultimately succumb to the evil. The way in which claims of fearful presumption have already been made and ratified, suggests the possibility of some future claim being advanced which will overshadow all others in its enormity and blasphemy. We seem, however, rather to be directed to look for the coming of one who shall combine in himself—in what way we cannot know—the two elements of unbelief and superstition, and will work towards the overthrow of all that is good and true. Thus drawing men after him to destruction, he is himself to be destroyed.

We may be satisfied at least with the conviction that this outstanding New Testament prophecy will not, like the arrow of Acastes (Virgil, *Æn.* v. 525), projected into space, and burning into nothingness among the clouds, fade away and never reach its mark. Time will at last disclose what that mark is.

LECTURE XXVI.

*“Not as yet
 Are we in shelter or repose,
 The holy house is still beset
 With leaguer of stern foes ;
 Wild thoughts within, bad men without,
 All evil spirits round about,
 Are banded in unblessed device,
 To spoil love's earthly paradise.”*

KEBLE.

*“Οὕτω πολεμῶμεν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς εὐχαῖς καὶ ἱκετηρίαις. Εἰ γὰρ
 τοῖς ἐνότλοις οὕτως ἐπολεμοῦν οἱ παλαιοὶ, πολλῷ μᾶλλον
 τοῖς χωρὶς ὅπλων οὕτω δεῖ πολεμεῖν.”*

CHRYSTOSTOM *in loc.*

“But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth ; whereunto He called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours. Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father which loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and stablish them in every good work and word. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you ; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men ; for all men have not faith. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.”—2 THESS. ii. 13—iii. 5.

WITH a sense of relief, in which his readers do not fail to share, the apostle turns away from the contemplation of evils to come, to thankful acknowledgment of his converts' attainments in the Christian life, and to earnest exhortation to steadfastness and progress therein. The preceding section, while it treats of the

future, is in no wise void of solemn lessons for the present. We are taught by it that there are fearful depths of evil into which men may sink, more especially when they are in close contact with the religion of Christ, and yet not savingly influenced by it. The "deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10) and "the depths of Satan" (Rev. ii. 24)—the "*profunda Dei et profunda Bythi*" (Iren. ii. 38), eternal contrasts as they are, may yet be very near each other in their relation to human experience. It exhibits to us further the nature and working of all defection from the truth: the first beginnings of evil hardly noticed, their development even for a time a mystery, a hidden thing, but at last when unresisted, or rather fostered, manifested in apostasy, and punished by the just judgment of God. It teaches us last of all that God, knowing the end from the beginning, preserves for Himself, and watches over, a seed that shall serve Him.

But the apostle, before he closes, desires to reiterate and enforce the directly practical lessons which in the previous Epistle he had already taught. With the exception indeed of the passages which refer to "the last things," both Epistles are far more distinctly hortatory than doctrinal. Ver. 13, "But we;" the "we" is emphatic. It includes Paul and his companions Silvanus and Timothy, and slightly implies the contrast which they present to those "who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"—"are bound to give thanks alway for you." The same formula, expressive of the apostle's deep and abiding thankfulness, appears in the beginning of the Epistle (chap. i. 3). "Brethren beloved of the Lord;" we find the same mode of address in 1 Thess. i. 4, with this variation, that here it is "of the Lord" that they are

represented as being beloved—the Lord Jesus Christ, as is shown by the name of God immediately following. The Thessalonian believers are the objects of His loving regard, in contrast, it may be, with the adherents of the man of sin, and indeed with all who do wickedly. The object of the apostolic thanksgiving is thus described, “Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation” (*vid.* 1 Thess. i. 4). “Beloved of the Lord” they are called, in connection with the thought that in Christ Jesus God had chosen them to Himself. This choosing is represented here by a word (ἐἵλετο) which is not used in the Pauline writings to signify the divine election proper. It slightly suggests the purpose for which the choice is made; and that purpose or end in this case is opposed to the lot of the class before mentioned, namely, their having sent them a strong delusion—a working of error, and their falling under the judgment of God. If this be so, then “from the beginning” does not strictly mean “from all eternity.” Paul uses a different mode of expression for this, *e.g.* 1 Cor. ii. 7, “before the world,” or Eph. i. 4, “before the foundation of the world.” It seems to signify rather the beginning of the gospel dispensation, the time of the entrance of Christianity into the world, as contrasted with the time of the end. While at that *end* ruin falls upon the victims of error, they, the believers in Thessalonica, are represented as chosen from the *beginning* “to salvation.”¹

¹ The reading ἀπαρχήν = Vulg. primitias, first-fruits, has considerable support from MSS., and has been adopted by several critics of good standing. It is easier, too, to conceive the changing of it into ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς than the reverse. The phrase further is not unknown in Paul’s writing, *e.g.* 1 Cor. xvi. 15. The meaning also which it gives fits well into the context, *vid.* on 1 Thess. i. 4. Upon the whole, however, it is safer to reject it.

The salvation to which the Thessalonians are described as chosen of God is regarded chiefly in the aspect of a present possession, and it is "in (not, through) sanctification of the spirit." The words surely do not mean "spiritual sanctification; an inward process, not merely outward change of conduct" (Mason in Ellicott's *N.T. Commentary*). The omission of the definite article in the original can be quite easily explained without having recourse to so unnatural a rendering. The salvation without doubt is that which is possessed in advancing holiness, the sanctification wrought in the spirit of man by the Divine Spirit—a renewal of the spirit of the believer which of necessity manifests itself in the renewal of his life. Browning (*The Ring and the Book*, iv. 180) uses five participles, which may serve to depict the stages of this saving change, in the line

"Deformed, transformed, reformed, informed, conformed."

And if we seek a figure to describe the blessedness of this change, we can hardly find one more impressive and true than that which one of the Bechuanas gave to Dr. Livingstone, in answer to the question, what he understood by the word used for holiness, "When copious showers have descended during the night, and all the earth and leaves and cattle are washed clean, and the sun rising shows a drop of dew on every blade of grass, and the air breathes fresh; that is holiness" (Livingstone, *Expedition to the Zambesi*, p. 64). In these words, coming from the very realm of heathenism, sanctification is represented as a change, effected by heavenly influences, from moral deformity into the freshness and beauty of new light and life. The apostle indicates how this sanctification, in which alone

salvation is possessed, is effected—"Belief of the truth" or "faith in the truth." There must be heart-acceptance of the truth, and heart-surrender to Him who is Himself the truth, and of whom the truth witnesses. "Whereunto," to which salvation as thus described, "He called you by our gospel." Whether the divine *choosing* be contemplated by Paul in this passage on its historical side or not, it is clear that the divine *calling* is thus contemplated; and it is regarded as taking effect through the preaching of the word—the ministry of reconciliation. The call is given in the offer of the gospel—"our gospel," the apostle calls it, as proclaimed by him, and as coming to them "not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (*vid.* on 1 Thess. i. 4, 5). The clause, "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," is a more particular definition of the salvation. It sets it forth in its more positive aspect, for the word "salvation" describes the believers' lot only negatively; its ultimate issue and end are the acquiring for themselves, unworthy as they are, Christ's glory. The clause glances back to 1 Thess. v. 9, which speaks of their obtaining salvation. Here there is an advance in the thought. Those who obtain the salvation, obtain also the glory which belongs to it—that glory which is Christ's own, but in which He calls His sanctified ones to share. There is indeed another rendering of the words, one which seems to have found most favour with the commentators of earliest times—"for obtaining of glory to our Lord Jesus Christ," as if the thought of 2 Thess. i. 12 were reproduced, "that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you." This translation, however, though it gives prominence to an aspect of truth which every believer

rejoices to contemplate, must be set aside : the words can only by something of violent treatment be forced into this signification.

Ver. 15, "Therefore, brethren," such being the divine purpose in regard to you ; the conclusion is drawn from the immediately preceding context, and not from the whole body of the Epistle, as if the word "therefore" meant "now that you are reminded of the true advent-doctrine." "Stand fast ;" "be not quickly shaken from your mind" (ver. 2), but be steadfast. The duty of perseverance is enforced upon the Thessalonians, both as a Church and as individuals—steadfast adherence to all truly Christian doctrine and practice, and that as possible only when there is loving loyalty to Christ Jesus Himself. The Apostle John gives a similar injunction in substantially the same connection of thought ; he closes his warning words in regard to the appearance of antichrists, and the coming of the Saviour, thus, "And now, little children, abide in Him, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." And how are they to "stand fast" ? The next clause gives answer, "and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" ("nil addentes, nil detrahentes," Bengel). What they are to keep with such tenacious grasp, is not apostolic precept as to the practical work of the Church. The whole of Paul's teaching is embraced in the word "traditions"—all "sound doctrine," as in the pastoral Epistles it is repeatedly called, though that part of it which bore upon the coming of the Lord would naturally be most prominent in his thought,—all doctrine which they had received from him, whether by word of mouth, or by letter, as opposed to erroneous teaching

from the lips of others, or insinuated in epistles falsely represented as his. The word "tradition" does not bear its later and common meaning. It in no way means what is handed down orally from one age of the Church to another; nor does its use here give any countenance to the observance of purely traditional practices in the Church. It simply means communications of instruction or exhortation or warning, coming direct—independently of any intermediate channels—from the teacher to the taught. These traditions, indeed, being apostolic, are of binding obligation upon succeeding ages of the Church, but only in so far as, divested of their local and temporal reference, they have been handed down to us in apostolic writings.

Ver. 16. And now after precept comes prayer, and the prayer is that their hearts may be comforted and stablished "in every good word and work." Their hearts, so full as they were of mingled despondency and hope in regard to the future, needed comfort, and comfort could come to them only in firmness—holding fast every good word, and translating it into every corresponding good work. Thus through meditation and action alike, the one ministering to the other, would they attain to tried Christian character—the crown of Christian life. Yet the attainment of this, while implying personal exertion, is after all the gift of God, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts." Paul had been earnestly seeking to comfort them, but, his heart charged with deepest emotion as he thinks of his own weakness, he turns to Him who is all-powerful—to his Lord and theirs—

Christ Jesus *Himself*. He alone is "the consolation of Israel." It seems to be this connection of thought, or rather of feeling, which accounts for the placing of the Saviour's name before that of God the Father. The order, however, is further accounted for by what follows. It is God the Father, of whom it is said, "which loved us." His love was manifested in the gift of His Son. The eternal Son of the eternal Father has Himself said (John iii. 16; the words are better taken as our Lord's than as the words of the evangelist), "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In the fact therein declared lies the "eternal comfort" which God has given—a comfort that is true, satisfying, enduring,—a comfort which, while it is possessed in time, can never be touched by time's decay, for it is a comfort which has its origin and existence in "good hope," a hope which lives in the all-encompassing sphere of grace—"a lively hope" (1 Pet. i. 3); "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. ii. 13). It is instructive to notice here, that as in 1 Thess. iii. 11 the Saviour is associated in prayer with God the Father as directing the outward movements, the external details of Paul's work, so in this passage He is similarly associated with God the Father in ministering to the soul-prosperity of believers. God the Son is thus represented as one with God the Father in being the source of all guiding and protecting care, and the source of all spiritual blessing. He is "Lord of all."

Chap. iii. "Finally, brethren," this is the conclusion of the whole matter, "pray for us." As at the close

of the first Epistle (1 Thess. v. 25), so now as he hastens to the close of the second, the apostle thinks of himself and his companions in labour and tribulation. And yet even when he does so, he is thinking most of others' spiritual welfare, for the petition which he entreats his converts to present on behalf of himself and associates is, "that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." The language is possibly suggested by Ps. cxlvii. 15, "His word runneth very swiftly," for "run" is a more literal rendering than "have free course." Its course was beset by many hindrances in Corinth, where Paul now was. He desires his friends therefore to pray that whatever these obstacles may be, however numerous and formidable, the gospel might have no slow and uncertain course, but might bear down all opposition, and be glorified in its proving itself to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The word of the Lord is glorified when it grows and multiplies, and mightily prevails (Acts vi. 7, xii. 24, xix. 20). It grows, for there is life in it. It is the good seed of the word. It multiplies, for it becomes a new seed in all who receive it into their hearts—each believer becoming himself a new "word of the Lord." It mightily prevails, for it exerts an ever-growing power—an ever-extending influence over the hearts and lives of men. These are different metaphors by which the progress of the gospel is described. In the present clause, however, "may run and be glorified," there may lie an allusion to the public games of Corinth. Such an allusion would not be unlikely to occur to the apostle, and the language, as applied to "the word," is sufficiently unusual to suggest that it did occur to him. "The word of the Lord" is

personified, and his earnest prayer is that it may run and gain the race, and be at length crowned with the wreath of triumph—the glory of success. He adds, “even as it is with you”—just as it ran to (πρός) you, and was glorified in your willing, joyful acceptance of it. He had made thankful reference to this before (1 Thess. i. 5-10); he delights to remember it again.

Another object of prayer, which the apostle sets before his friends in Thessalonica, is “that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.” There is more of the personal element in this than in that which precedes it, and yet here, too, his desire is not for self-preservation so much as for the prosperity and success of his ministry. It has been supposed that we have here an indication of his natural fearfulness—the shrinking of flesh in the midst of persecutions, or in the near prospect of them. There do indeed seem to be passages in his Epistles which point in this direction (*e.g.* 1 Thess. ii. 2). It is, however, more than doubtful that this is one of them. The opponents from whom he earnestly desires to be delivered do not appear in this case to be active persecutors. They are indeed commonly understood to be the unbelieving Jewish party in Corinth (*vid.* Acts xviii. 6, 12),—men who opposed Paul’s work both by blasphemy and by uproar and tumult; and that such unscrupulous foes were everywhere confronting him and seeking to thwart his ministry, is evident enough. But the terms in which his present enemies are branded seem rather to point to false Christians—false brethren in the Corinthian Church, such as are alluded to in 2 Cor. xi. 13-15 and xii. 12-21. They are called “unreasonable,” literally, men who are in the wrong

place — both in heart and in life, — in opinion and practice different from what they profess to be. They are therefore base men, for that, too, is the secondary meaning of the word. They are, as Paul here says, not only “unreasonable,” but also “wicked.” This description best fits into the view that they were opponents within the Church, but in no sense truly of it — followers of Christ in name, but in their inmost nature His foes (so Calvin, Jowett, Alexander). That this view is the correct one is further apparent from the explanatory clause which follows, “for all men have not faith.” Supposing the “unreasonable and wicked men” to be Gentiles or Jews, this addition is almost meaningless. “It would be like saying, ‘Pray God to deliver me from my enemies, for all men are not Christians;’ or, ‘Pray God to deliver me from Jews or heathens, for they are unconverted;’ — a self-evident remark, which it would be unmeaning to attribute to him” (Jowett). How much better it is to understand the reference to be to false professors! Then Paul’s prayer is for deliverance from them, for all men are not what they seem, — all have not the faith of Christ, who have assumed His name. There are two other renderings of the clause which may be noticed. Relying upon a Hebrew idiom, Mason (Ellicott’s *N.T. Commentary*) suggests that the meaning may be “for there is not one of them that believes.” But there is little to be said in favour of this somewhat strained translation. Alford, on the other hand, along with others, renders the meaning thus, “All men have not receptivity for the faith.”¹ But the clause is most

¹ Compare Luther’s version, “Denn der Glaube ist nicht jedermanns Ding.” Heubner quotes d’Alembert’s saying, “La Foi est une espèce de sixième sens, que le Createur accorde ou refuse à son gré.”

naturally understood as the simple statement of a fact that all are not believers. There is no reason for importing into it any theological element as to the relation in which faith in man stands to the work of God (John vi. 29).

Ver. 3, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil." The apostle turns from thinking of evil men and their ways—men who, not having the faith themselves, seek to destroy its influence upon others—to Him who is faithful. There is a play, though it be more of sound than of sense, upon the immediately preceding word (*πίστις*, *πιστός*). "Faithful," the epithet is applied in 1 Thess. v. 24 to God the Father (*vid.* also 1 Cor. i. 9; Heb. x. 23, xi. 11); it represents Him in His faithfulness to His own promises, carrying on what He has begun to its final completion. It represents that which is essential to our very conception of God: "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13). It is here applied to Christ Jesus. At least it seems better to understand it so, than as referring to God, without any allusion to any one Person in the adorable Trinity. He the Son is faithful in His relation to the Father (Heb. iii. 2) and in His relation to His people (Heb. ii. 17). As head of His Church He shows His faithfulness in stablishing His people (1 Thess. iii. 2), and in guarding them "from the evil one"—so the Revised Version, and in all probability rightly. In 1 Thess. ii. 18 and iii. 5, and in 2 Thess. ii. 9, direct allusion is made to Satan, the tempter, the evil one, who rules in the children of disobedience, and through them seeks the hurt, the destruction of the children of the kingdom. In 1 John ii. 13 and v. 18, further, we have the word which Paul

here employs, and in both cases in the masculine form. There is thus a presumption in favour of the rendering "evil one" here; all the more, too, that his servants, "unreasonable and *evil* men," the servants of sin through whom he works, have just been specified. And in addition to this we seem to have a tacit antithesis suggested between the *faithful* Lord Himself and the adversary, whose *lying* works He has come, and will yet come, to destroy. The evil one then in this connection is not the lawless one, the antichrist, the son of perdition, of the previous chapter, but the master whom the lawless one serves. If indeed "the form of antichrist may be again for a moment rising up before the apostle's eyes" (Jowett), the vision leads him to think of that personal power of evil whose emissary and agent antichrist is declared to be.

Ver. 4, "And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you." While Paul directs his readers' thoughts to the faithfulness of their Saviour, he will also encourage them by the assurance that he himself has confidence in them—a confidence which he holds fast, because he rests on the faithfulness of their common Lord—"faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." He believes that they are even now doing, and that they will continue to do, all that he enjoins. Whatever be the tendency to faintness, for Christian work is toil, he is persuaded that the grace of perseverance will be theirs. His commands or injunctions are described by a word, rarely used by him elsewhere, but conspicuous by its frequency here. His earnest yearning over them manifested itself in precept strong and firm. But again, so strangely

mingle in his mind thoughts of human agency and divine blessing needful to prosper it, his thoughts take the form of aspiration.

Ver. 5, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." The Lord is not the Holy Spirit, as some think, but Christ Jesus Himself, whose servants he and his converts alike are. He is besought to direct every desire of their hearts into love towards God, the central point in which all Christian feelings meet and harmonize, and into "the patience of Christ"—that patience which He Himself exhibited in all its perfection of beauty, which He has specially enjoined upon His followers—which, in a word, is the sign and seal of His kingdom upon earth. It is "the kingdom and patience" now (Rev. i. 9); it is to become "His kingdom and glory" hereafter (1 Thess. ii. 12). So long as men have their hearts ever turning to the love of God, they will be "strengthened with all might unto all patience," so that they, doing whatsoever is commanded, may endure unto the end.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

LECTURE XXVII.

"Qui frumentum suum sumit ex platea, similis est infanti, cujus mater mortua est, quem ad fores aliarum nutricum adferunt, sed non saturatur. Qui ex foro emit, similis est ei, qui panem defodit. Qui vero panem proprium edit, similis est infanti, qui uberibus matris suæ lactatur. Quo tempore homo panem proprium edit, animo composito ac sedato est: si vero panem parentum aut liberorum comedit, non animo tam sedato est, ne dicam de pane peregrino."

Rabbinical saying. WETSTEIN.

"Sobrii ergo estote et vos in hoc; et non sicut inimicos tales existimetis, sed sicut passibilia membra et errantia eos revocate, ut omnium vestrum corpus salvetis. Hoc enim agentes, vos ipsos ædificatis."

S. POLYCARPI Ep. ad Philippenses xi.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labour and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any man will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing. And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."—2 THESS. iii. 6-18.

IT is noticeable with what tenderness of phraseology the apostle reluctantly approaches this closing section. In the commands which he feels constrained to issue he has to mingle words of reproof. Hence he

has prepared the way for these by allusions to his own need of sympathy and help, declarations of confidence in the divine guidance both of himself and of his converts, earnest prayers for their spiritual prosperity. All these lead up to the commands which, clothed with the responsibilities of special office in the Church, he feels he dare not neglect to give. "Now we command you, brethren." There is a harshness in the word "command;" he would therefore soften it by adding "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is not speaking for himself, but for his Lord and theirs, and he is pleading with them to render a cheerful obedience for Christ's sake. He is addressing, not the overseers of the Church alone, but the entire company of the "brethren." And the command thus firmly but gently given has a reference to the "unruly" members (1 Thess. v. 14) — "Every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he (rather, they) received of us." In so far as the precept regarding the duty and dignity of work, which he had given both by word of mouth and by letter already sent, had been disobeyed, there was disorderly conduct. A military metaphor lies in the word "disorderly," as has been seen already in 1 Thess. v. 14. It describes the unruly as men who are not in their proper places in the ranks of the Christian army, men who are setting aside the strict rules of discipline, thereby causing disorder and courting disaster. In every such case of insubordination, as in effect it is, even though it arise from erroneous or defective views about the Saviour's coming, rather than from actual perversity of heart, the command is "that ye withdraw yourselves." In the first Epistle the brethren are exhorted to *warn* the unruly (1 Thess. v. 14). But now in the second there

is a tone of heightened severity in the apostle's words. The command is to *withdraw*. It has been supposed that an illustration lies in this word as well as in the former. It may be so, for as Jean Paul Richter has said, "language is but a dictionary of faded metaphors." But it is probable that the metaphor in this case has almost entirely faded away. If, however, we try to brighten it up again, what do we find it to be? Wordsworth and others see in it a nautical figure, suitable to a maritime and commercial community such as that of Thessalonica; we have such a figure in 2 Thess. ii. 2. It would thus mean, As you take in your sails to steer clear of a rock or reef or any such danger, so give a wide berth to every such disorderly brother. He and all like him are hidden rocks of danger (*vid.* Jude ver. 12, Revised Version). Such an illustration is quite a fitting one. But if we are to furbish up the faded metaphor at all, it is better to take it as military rather than nautical. In this way it would be a natural continuation of the metaphor lying in the word "disorderly." Thus understood, it suggests a strategical movement—the withdrawing, prudent and cautious, but not necessarily timid, on the part of a general with his band of soldiers, from the enemy. It is wise to withdraw from such stragglers out of the ranks; they give the Christian army a bad name, they wield a bad influence. They lower the general feeling, and they retard progress. They have therefore to be avoided, even more than if they were actually and openly ranged on the opposing side. They are the most dangerous of all foes who belong to the ranks and yet are out of them. In this connection of thought it may be observed that there is no such stringent rule in regard to the relation of believers to the heathen among whom their

lot is cast. It is the disorderly *brother* who is to be shunned ; yet, although thus severely treated, he is to be looked upon as a brother after all, his conduct with all its culpability having its root in mistaken views rather than in heart-depravity. Hence the apostle in ver. 15 adds, "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Although he is to be *treated* in this respect as an enemy, he is to be *counted* as a brother.

Ver. 7, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us." The "for" is expository and confirmatory of the fact that such precepts had been received from Paul. He appeals to the personal knowledge of his readers, and in the appeal there is a regretful reproof that he should need to speak of the matter again, and that too in terms of greater directness and severity than before. It is always a more difficult and irksome duty to exhort men to do right, when they already know what right is. But in the apostle's case the difficulty is so far lightened, when in his reiterated exhortation he can appeal to his own example. The apostolic precept is winged with the beauty of a consistent life. The eloquence of Paul's winning appeals and earnest commands was more than matched by the silent eloquence of his own self-denying labours. He shows how he could remind his friends not only of "tradition" received from him, but also of example set by him, "for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you." The verses 8 and 9 are substantially a repetition of what he had previously written, 1 Thess. ii. 6, 9. They have consequently been already under our review. There are, however, slight variations to be noticed. "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought," or in the Revised Version, "Neither did we

eat bread for nought at any man's hand." We may possibly trace something of righteous contempt for the man who would do so, breathing in the words. In his own case, indeed, even if he had received such aid as he rejected,—if he had eaten bread at another's hands, it could not have been "for nought," since his Master had declared that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." This aspect of the case, therefore, he is careful not to cover over. He guards his rights for the sake of himself and others; "not because we have not power" (authority, right). But he would rather say, as he did in a similar connection (1 Cor. ix. 12), "Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." He waived his undoubted right, in order that no possible charge of selfish ends might be brought against him, to the hindrance of the gospel which he preached. He acted rather so that he might be taken by them as an "ensample" (1 Thess. i. 7). His desire was not gain, but to see himself reproduced in the imitation of his friends. Goethe has said, "The fairest metempsychosis is when we see ourselves reappear in others" (*Die schönste Metempsychose ist die wenn wir uns in andern wieder auftreten sehen*). Such was the yearning of the apostle's heart.

The "for" of ver. 10 looks back to ver. 6, the allusion to his own practice being almost a parenthesis. "Even when we were with you, we commanded you" (the Revised Version gives the proper stress upon the words "this we commanded you") "that if any should not work, neither should he eat." He who declines the obligations of work is to be met with the refusal of aid. He has no right to look to the combined offerings of the faithful, or to the casual favour of individuals,

for support. He that has no business to do, has no business to eat. This canon, if it may be so called, rests apparently upon a Rabbinical proverbial saying, and perhaps glances back at the divine decree issued after the fall, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. iii. 19). It exists still as a rule of human duty. It had been set aside by some members, although possibly few in number (*τῶν*), of the Thessalonian Church. The apostle therefore re-enunciates it for their warning, and for the guidance of all. "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." There is a play upon the words which cannot be quite satisfactorily reproduced—not busy, but busybodies, men whose neglect of their own business showed itself in interference with the business of others—or as more exactly Webster and Wilkinson put it, "working nothing, but overworking" (*vid.* 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12, both for the subject-matter and for a similar play of words). It was no light matter this, but a serious evil. In their excited restlessness they were failing to recognise the truth that in this world of sin work is a blessing, because it is a safeguard. They were in danger of giving illustration of the Eastern adage, that "the devil tempts other men, but idle men tempt the devil." Hence the words of mingled severity and mildness, "Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." In tranquillity, sedateness of heart and life, they are severally not only to work, but to do their own work, and so "have need of no man." Thus the bread which is their own will be doubly sweet to them. If we revert to the military metaphor which underlies the word "disorderly," and

may also underlie, as we have seen, the word “withdraw,” we may place another saying of the apostle’s into connection with these injunctions—“Every man shall bear his own burden” (Gal. vi. 5)—his own personal and proper load. The word is used to signify a soldier’s kit or knapsack. In Christian warfare, then, each faithful soldier must see that he has his own weight, and that he does not encumber another with it, or take up another’s instead of his own. All acts of this kind are a walking disorderly.

Believers, then, have daily work to do—not only Christian work, but all work done in a Christian spirit. The record of their days must never be like that said to have been found in the diary of Louis XVI. after the first French Revolution—the simple word occurring almost on every page, “nothing, nothing.” Time rather must be redeemed, not wasted. Thus, in the ceaseless devotion of the whole life, the faithful Christian

“ through enduring pain,
Links month to month, with long drawn chain
Of knitted purport.”

The Master’s midnight call will be heard with gladness by those only who are “diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

It is a lesson of this kind that is enforced by ver. 13, “But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.” The apostle is turning now to those whom he believes to be orderly, and in whom his confidence is lovingly placed. He exhorts them not to lose heart, not to faint as cowards, in doing whatever is honourable and good—all actions which are fair in themselves and blissful in their results (*καλοποιοῦντες*). An implied commendation

lies in the injunction. They are even now engaged in well-doing, and they are urged, by perseverance therein, to show forth "the patience of Christ." But what specially is this well-doing? Surely it is not to be restricted to charitable acts. We can, it is true, quite readily understand how these may have been uppermost in the apostle's mind as he wrote. His readers are exhorted "to do good and to communicate," that is, to contribute of their substance for the necessities of others (Heb. xiii. 16). They are to guard against the indignation and disgust which idleness, on the part of some of their number, had a natural tendency to produce in their minds. They are not, by yielding to such feelings, to be neglectful in relieving the wants of their poorer brethren; they are rather to remember the old saying, "The hands of the poor are the treasury-box of Christ" (*Manus pauperum est Christi gazophylacium*). None the less the command goes far beyond this. There is to be well-doing in the widest sense of the word. Surveying "the huge circumference of human woe," Christ's people are never to faint in the work of leaving the world better than they found it. The saying of Rothe (*Stille Stunden*) can never lose its significance in this world of sorrow, "The weightiest necessity for a Christian man (I mean, one who is really a believer in Christ) is, for his soul's prosperity, that he get some good thing to do." In Gal. vi. 9, which is an exact parallel with this passage, we find the encouragement to perseverance given in the promise of reward, "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Relying on this promise, the believer, in the sphere of quiet, regular, unceasing Christian service, knows that at last, when the night "comes shadowy on his eyes," the

harvest-day is near its dawning—the reaping of life everlasting.

Ver. 14. So intent is the apostle on impressing the duty of work upon the minds of his readers, that he almost threatens while he commands, “If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.” There are different ways of explaining this verse. Mark that man by this Epistle ; brand him, as it were, by showing, by means of this Epistle, how heinous is his wrong-doing—so some explain it, but with little probability on their side. Still less likely is the meaning, “send us word of him by letter” (Tyndale), or “signify him by an Epistle” (Bishop’s Bible). So, too, Jeremy Taylor, who finds an argument therein in support of Episcopacy, “Signify him to me by an Epistle ; so he charges the Thessalonians, and therefore of this Church St. Paul as yet clearly kept the power in his own hands. So that the Church was ever, in all the parts of it, governed by episcopal or apostolical authority” (*Episcopacy Asserted*, Lect. xxi.). The argument, however, in so far as it rests on this passage, is to be set aside ; it rests on a translation which cannot be sustained. There is no indication, even of the slightest kind, in the context that the apostle expected any such letters in return. Besides, supposing him to have received such a letter about disorderly members, what purpose would be served ? He has already given specific instructions as to the way in which they are to be dealt with. But the language in itself sets aside this view. The definite article before “Epistle” makes it clear that “our word by this Epistle” is the only admissible rendering ; and the Revised Version well brings out the meaning of the clause following,

“note that man, that ye have no company with him.” It is no mark that is to be set upon him—no stigma, though indeed this as a matter of fact would follow. It is to be a mental marking of him on their part, and the purpose of it is perhaps no formal suspension or excommunication, but an avoidance of him—a withdrawing from him (ver. 6), which would in the nature of things carry with it a kind of ecclesiastical censure and suspension. Thus, then, it appears that such an one sets a mark upon himself. The disorder and disobedience of his life are the marks of spiritual disease—the beginnings of what may end in death. Like the spots on the body, indicating the first stages of the plague, which the Armenians call the *pilotti*, the pilots or harbingers of death (Curzon, *Monasteries of the Levant*, p. 280), so upon the character of such “unruly” ones there are spots, which are pilots of the ruin of the soul. It is therefore dangerous for those who are whole to have company with these. Withdrawal is needful for their safety. But especially is it needful for the good of the erring brother himself. He may be led in this way to a wholesome shame—that shame which Carlyle has called “the soul of all virtues, of all good manners, and good morals.”

Ver. 15, “Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” He is still one of themselves, notwithstanding the severity of the treatment to which he is to be subjected. He is to be won back to the right way. The admonishing is to be brotherly, for as Gregory of Nazianzus says, “Too harsh chiding is like an axe that flieth from the handle. It may kill thy brother, when it should only cut down the briars of sin.”

Ver. 16, "Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means." Reproof is to aim not at discord, but at peace—constant and all-pervading—peace of conscience, peace in the midst of persecutions from without, peace of concord, and at last the peace of heaven. This peace is not, as in the corresponding benediction in 1 Thess. v. 23, represented as the gift of God, but as the gift of Christ Jesus—of Him who Himself is "our Peace." It is the possession of all His people—of all who receive His words, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"The Lord be with you all." There is no true peace without His presence, and His presence can never be enjoyed without His peace. This apostolic benediction rests on the Saviour's parting assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The Epistle closes thus, "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle." There is the suggestion here that other letters may have passed between the apostle and the Thessalonian believers. If there were such a correspondence, we may possibly regard it as not having had any doctrinal interest, and therefore as having been allowed to disappear. The amanuensis, probably Timothy, has now finished his work, and the apostle authenticates it. He gives his sign-manual as a guarantee of the genuineness of the letter. He calls attention to it. Though his readers doubtless were acquainted with it before, he asks them to mark it well—its large and, it may be, uncouth characters (Gal. vi. 11) were to be "the token in every Epistle" he might in future send either

to them or to others, where attestation was needful. "So I write." Let there be therefore henceforth no room for the success of the plans of designing men, who would subvert his teaching, while they used his name.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all." The benediction is the same as in the first Epistle, with the single significant addition of the word "all." It serves a loving purpose here. Caught up as it may be from ver. 16, where it is so prominent, it is meant to include the disorderly brethren, regarding whom he had painfully dictated words of severity. He would indeed leave the censure written ; but he would, before he closes, take away its sting. All, without exception, are enfolded in his loving embrace. Upon all he asks the divine grace to descend.

Including ourselves and the whole household of God in the "all," let us ever present the prayer (Cornelius a Lapide *in loc.*), "Da nobis, Domine, non deficere benefaciendo ; da pacem sempiternam ; da Te ipsum : quia Tu es æternitas pacis, gaudiorum, et bonorum omnium. Amen."



NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.



FIRST THESSALONIANS.

LECTURE I.

1 THESS. i. 1.

NOTE 1, p. 2.—“Epistolary correspondence was the very form which was of all others the best adapted to the apostle’s individuality. It suited the impetuosity of emotion which could not have been fettered down to the composition of formal treatises. It could be taken up or dropped according to the necessities of the occasion or the feelings of the writer. It permitted of a freedom of expression which was far more intense and far more natural to the apostle than the regular syllogisms and rounded periods of a book. It admitted something of the tenderness and something of the familiarity of personal intercourse. Into no other literary form could he have infused that intensity which made a Christian scholar truly say of him that he alone of writers seems to have written, not with fingers and pen and ink, but with his very heart, his very feelings, the unbarred palpitations of his inmost being.”—Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, i. p. 576.

NOTE 2, p. 8.—We find throughout these Epistles that the apostle usually employs the plural form “we, our, us.” In many such cases it is almost impossible to include Silvanus and Timothy in the reference. On the other hand, to regard the plural form as what is called the *pluralis majestaticus*, a form befitting the dignity of the apostolic office, and the importance, the weighty nature of his counsels, is almost equally difficult. This view, however, is very ably supported

by Laurent in his article in the *Studien und Kritiken*, 1868, p. 159. But upon the whole, the common view is the most satisfactory, that in the unrestrained naturalness of epistolary writing, and in the warm brotherliness of his heart, the apostle uses the plural form as suggesting more or less definitely a reference to his companions, but in many of the instances, in the very nature of the case, speaking for and referring to himself alone.

NOTE 3, p. 10, ver. 1.—“*The Church.*” It is not quite certain whether the apostle adopted the word (*ἐκκλησία*) from the LXX., who usually so render *קהל*, or from the common Greek usage—a public assembly (Acts xix. 39). At all events it has with him a clear and well-defined meaning—the company of the faithful, the assembly of those who are “saints” (*vid.* Immer, *Theologie des N. Test.* p. 321). It is worthy of notice that while the Church of Thessalonica is carefully distinguished from all heathen and Jewish assemblies by the clauses “in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ,” the Churches of Judæa are not so described. They are simply called “which are in Christ” (Gal. i. 22). It is not necessary to contrast *them* with the heathen. It is sufficient to distinguish *them* from the religious assemblies of the Jews, which the Jews themselves might designate as churches “in God the Father.” Hence the distinguishing mark for them is needed, and nothing more, “which were in Christ.”

LECTURE II.

1 THESS. i. 1-3.

NOTE 1, p. 13, ver. 1.—There are interesting sketches of the origin and history of the word *χάρις*, grace, in Max Müller's *Lectures on Language*, ii. p. 369 ff., and Cox's *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*. We learn there how, under “the magic wand of metaphor,” it

step by step attained its meaning. *Εἰρήνη*, peace (probably derived from *εἶρω*, to bind), the result of grace received, is that which binds men together in the one fellowship of Christ. He Himself is "our Peace." In Him men possess *εἰρήνη βαθεῖα καὶ λιπαρά* (1 Clem. ad Cor. i.). In the Latin Hymnology Christ's Church also is called "Pax" (*vid.* Mone, *Hymni Latini Medii Ævi*, i. 321).

NOTE 2, p. 17, ver. 2. — On the combination of thanksgiving with prayer, *vid.* Howson's *Lectures on the Character of St. Paul*, Lect. iv.

Our Lord's prayer at the grave of Lazarus is in its form a thanksgiving only (John xi. 41, 42). Lampe says well on that passage, "*Per preces flumina bonorum ex fonte inexhausto omnis bonitatis hauriuntur, per gratiarum actionem ad illum tanquam oceanum redeunt.*"

The Book of Common Prayer gives right emphasis to the duty of thanksgiving for others: "Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, Thine unworthy servants, do give Thee most humble and hearty thanks for all Thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, *and to all men.*" And again, "Almighty and everlasting God, who by Thy holy apostles hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, *and to give thanks for all men.*"

NOTE 3, p. 19, ver. 3. — "Was ist selbst der glücklichste Mensch ohne Glauben? Eine schöne Blume in einem Glasse Wasser, ohne Wurzel und ohne Dauer." — Ludwig Börne, *Lichtstrahlen*, p. 71.

On the Christian graces of Love and Patience, *vid.* respectively Barrow, Sermon. xxvii. and xlii.

The relation of faith, love, and hope is described by Opitz, *Das System des Paulus nach seinen Briefen*, p. 325, "Der Glaube ist das einzige und fortdauernde Werk, das der Christ auf Erden zu vollbringen hat. Die Liebe ist *κόπος* nicht nach der subjectiven Empfindung. Liebe und Last sind Gegensätze. Die

Gebote sind dem nicht schwer, dem sie Gott in der Liebe in das Herz geschrieben hat, sondern nach ihrer innern Kraft als selbstverleugnender und aufopferungsvoller. Die Geduld ist die charakteristische Zustands- und Erscheinungsform, worin die Hoffnung hienieden sich erweist." F. C. Baur, *Life and Work of Paul*, ii. 232, "Faith, love, and hope are the three momenta of the Christian consciousness, the three essential forms in which it finds expression; but while to faith and hope that infinity of the subject which Christianity promises is reserved for the transcendent hereafter, and is unattained here, love possesses that infinity here and now as her own immanent virtue."

The view that τοῦ κυρίου belongs strictly to ἐλπίδος alone receives some support from a passage in 1 Clem. ad Cor. lvii., ἐκριφῆναι ἐκ τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτοῦ, to be cast out, that is to say, *from the hope of Him*.

LECTURE III.

1 THESS. i. 4-6.

NOTE 1, p. 29, ver. 5.—*In power and in the Holy Ghost*, not, as Calvin, "in potentia Spiritus Sancti." Compare Rom. i. 4, xv. 13, 19; 1 Cor. ii. 4; Gal. iii. 5; Eph. iii. 16; 2 Tim. i. 7. In other passages "power" seems to stand alone for the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. v. 5, vi. 14, and 2 Cor. xiii. 4). But that the Holy Spirit, not merely a spiritual influence, is distinctly referred to here, is beyond all doubt (*vid.* Wendt, *Die Begriffe Fleisch und Geist*, p. 146).

NOTE 2, p. 30, ver. 5. — *Much assurance*. "Mit grosser Fülle der Ueberzeugung," De Wette. "Non in phastasia, sed in veritate plenitudinis," Ambrose. Compare πληροφορία τῆς συνέσεως, Col. ii. 2; πληροφορία τῆς ἐλπίδος, Heb. vi. 11; and πληροφορία πίστεως, Heb. x. 22.

LECTURE IV.

1 THESS. i. 7-10.

NOTE 1, p. 40, ver. 8. — *Vid.* the interesting discussion of Christianity as distinctively the missionary religion, and as compared with others which are also missionary but in a lesser degree, and it may even be said, in a different sense, in Max Müller's Lecture on Missions, in *Chips from a German Workshop*, iv. p. 254.

NOTE 2, p. 43, ver. 8.—*λαλεῖν* is well distinguished from *λέγειν* by Trench, *Synonyms*, and also by Philippi on Rom. iii. 18, and by Ellicott on Tit. ii. 1. *λαλεῖν* = vocem ore mittere ; *λέγειν* = dicere, sc. colligere verba in sententiam : *εἰπεῖν* = verba facere. In this case *λαλεῖν* is used with special propriety, as perhaps keeping up the figure of *ἐξήχηται*. He did not need to utter anything (*τι*)—not even a single sound.

NOTE 3, p. 45, ver. 9.—*The true God*. “The Greek word for ‘true’ (*ἀληθινός*) may be noticed as that which is generally characteristic of St. John. Luke xvi. 11 is the only instance of its use in the first three Gospels : St. Paul uses it only here, and then after companionship with St. Luke. It is found in three passages of the Epistle to the Hebrews (viii. 2, ix. 14, 24, x. 22), twenty-three times in the writings of St. John.” Dr. Plumptre on Luke xvi. 11 (Ellicott's *N.T. Com.*).

NOTE 4, p. 46, ver. 10.—*To wait for*. Compare *ἀναμένειν* with the similar use of *ἀπεκδέχεσθαι*, 1 Cor. i. 7 ; Philip. iii. 20 ; and *προσδοκᾶν*, 2 Pet. iii. 12-14.

“In sofern das Heil in der Vergangenheit gestiftet ist und in der Zukunft sich vollenden wird, ist das Christenleben jetzt noch zwischen Vergangenheit und

Zukunft, zwischen Glauben und Hoffnung getheilt. Die Auferstehung Christi ist der Fusspunkt seiner Erhöhung und als solcher die Bürgschaft seiner Wiederkunft, bei welcher er uns von dem jetzt schon im Herannahen begriffenen, dereinst im Gericht anbrennenden und die Gottlosen verzehrenden Zorn Gottes befreien und zu seiner Herrlichkeit vollenden wird."—Opitz, *das System des Paulus nach seinen Briefen*, p. 327.

"*The wrath to come.*" "We must, of course, separate from the idea of wrath, when we apply it to God, all the defilements which ordinarily attach to this sentiment in human beings. It is moral indignation in all its purity, the holy antipathy of the Good Being for that which is evil, without the slightest alloy of personal irritation or of selfish resentment. It is the dissatisfaction which is excited in a pure being by the sight of impurity; it signifies the outward manifestations which testify to this deep dissatisfaction, and the sufferings which result from it to him who has provoked it. The wrath of God, so understood, is a necessary consequence of the profound difference which separates good from evil. To deny this would oblige us to consider evil not as the opposite, but simply as an imperfect form of good."—Godet, *Studies in N. Test.* p. 152.

LECTURE V.

1 THESS. ii. 1-4.

NOTE 1, p. 53, ver. 2. — *Contention.* ἀγῶνι, i.e. "Studio, solitudine, periculo, certamine, labore."—Zegerus.

"Hic ergo est agon prædicationis evangelii in quo cum dæmone, Judæis, Gentibus, philosophis, tyrannis, magistratibus, ærumnis, persecutionibus, omnique adversitate, Paulo et Apostolis certandum fuit."—Cornelius a Lapide.

NOTE 2, p. 57, ver. 3. — *Uncleanness*. There is nothing to give any support to what Conybeare and Howson say, that "the charge of impurity (*ἀκαθαρσία*) might also have been suggested to impure minds, as connected with the conversion of female proselytes."

Compare this verse with 2 Cor. ii. 17, and *vid.* especially Stanley's note thereon.

NOTE 3, p. 59, ver. 4. — *Which trieth our hearts*. "Im Allgemeinen bedeutet *καρδία* bei Paulus (ebenso wie *לֵב* im Alten Testament) den 'Sinn,' welcher für alle Bewusstseinsäusserungen und deshalb zumal auch für die sittliche und religiöse Willensrichtung bestimmend ist. Unser Wort 'Herz' dürfen wir nicht zur Uebersetzung anwenden, wenigstens nicht in seiner gewöhnlichen Bedeutung, welche einen viel engeren Begriff darbietet, als das alt-testamentlich-paulinische Wort. Denn in der *καρδία* wohnen nicht nur die Gefühle (Rom. ix. 2, x. 1; 2 Cor. ii. 4, vi. 11), sondern von ihr gehen vor Allem auch die Gedanken, Pläne, Begierden aus, und zwar in guter wie in böser Richtung (Rom. i. 21, 24, ii. 5, vi. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 5, vii. 37; 2 Cor. viii. 16, ix. 7). Als charakteristisches Merkmal der *καρδία* ist endlich hervorzuheben ihre Verborgenheit (Rom. ii. 28 ff.; 1 Cor. xiv. 25). Die Kenntniss der *καρδία* ist ein besonderes Attribut Gottes (Rom. viii. 27) und die Offenbarung ihrer verborgenen Anschläge bildet ein Hauptmoment des zukünftigen Gerichts (1 Cor. iv. 5)." — Wendt, *die Begriffe Fleisch und Geist im biblischen Sprachgebrauch*, p. 134.

LECTURE VI.

1 THESS. ii. 5-9.

NOTE 1, p. 63, ver. 5. — *Flattering words*, *vid.* the Characters of Theophrastus, "*The Flatterer*:" Professor Jebb has the following note thereon: "The

notion conveyed by the term *κολακεία* is not precisely what we usually mean by 'flattery,' but something coarser. It meant a sort of extravagant toadyism, practised, not as a fine art, but simply as an industry—as a recognised method of obtaining a livelihood." Aristotle (*Ethic. Nic.* iv. 6), quoted also by Jebb, thus defines the word, "Of those who try to give pleasure, he who with no further motive aims at being pleasant is complaisant (*ἄρεσκος*); he who does so in order that advantage may accrue to him *in respect of money or anything that money procures*, is a flatterer." We may add what Plato (*Gorgias*, 463) represents Socrates as saying, "To me, Gorgias, the whole, of which rhetoric is a part, appears to be a process, not an art, but the habit of a bold and ready wit, which knows how to behave to the world; this I sum up under the word 'flattery.'"—(Jowett's translation.)

Cornelius a Lapide has the following note: "Diogenes dictitabat, melius esse incidere in *κόρακας* quàm *κόλακας*, id est, in corvos quàm in parasitos: hi enim viventis animum corrumpunt; illi solùm mortui corpus. Diogenes rursum blandam orationem ad gratiam compositam, vocabat melleum laqueum, quod blandé amplectens hominem jugulet. Denique Alfonsus Aragonum rex adulatores suæ curiæ aiebat esse similes avibus circumvolantibus trirerem, attentisque si quis bolus ex trireme excideret, ut illum excipiant, et mox avolent."

NOTE 2, p. 69, ver. 7.—*Gentle among you.* There is very strong external support of the reading *νήπιοι*, babes, instead of *ἦπιοι*. But, as has been frequently pointed out, the initial *ν* of that reading may have been introduced from the preceding word. The strongest argument, however, against *νήπιοι* is that it entirely destroys the figure. If it were merely a disturbing of the figure, or a slight departure from it, it might possibly be taken as an argument even in its favour. But it is very difficult to accept a reading which

introduces such utter confusion. Besides, as Bishop Alexander has shown, such a use of the word “babes” would not at all be in accordance with the apostle’s practice. “It would seem as if the spiritually infirm, the morally and intellectually weak, were thus described by St. Paul. (Cf. ‘teacher of *babes*,’ Rom. ii. 20; ‘*babes* in Christ,’ 1 Cor. iii. 1; ‘we when we were *babes*,’ Gal. iv. 3; ‘Every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a *babe*,’ Heb. v. 13). ‘In malice be ye *babes*,’ is indeed an exception; but the passage has a subtle play on the good and bad senses of childhood, as *childishness* and *childlikeness*. Besides the usage of the word, St. Paul, in the context, presents himself and the Thessalonians in an aspect which would entirely reverse, and by implication contradict the figure of babyhood applied to himself. *They* are the *babes*; *he* is the *τροφός*, *mother*, who is also nurse.”

It ought also to be noticed that *ἡπιότης*, parental tenderness, is specially mentioned by Paul (2 Tim. ii. 24) as an essential characteristic of every true pastor. Its usage in that passage is a strong argument in favour of its retention here.

NOTE 3, p. 70, ver. 8. — *Our own souls*. There may possibly be a tacit opposition of *ἐαντῶν* to the preceding *τοῦ Θεοῦ*. The apostle describes himself as having been willing to give his friends not only the gospel of *God*, but also something of his own—that which was part of himself, his very life.

LECTURE VII.

1 THESS. ii. 10–12.

NOTE 1, p. 80, ver. 11.—*Exhorted and comforted*. *Vid.* Phil. ii. 1 for the same combination of words. *παρακαλεῖν* embraces generally the whole sphere of

apostolic activity, in so far as its purpose is to strengthen and develope Christian faith and life: *παραμυθεῖσθαι* is specially used to represent the imparting of encouragement—the presenting of motives to do or to refrain from doing anything. Opitz, *das System des Paulus nach seinen Briefen*, p. 259, has an exhaustive note on *παρακαλεῖν*.

NOTE 2, p. 81, ver. 12.—For a discussion of the words *βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *vid.* Achelis, *die Bergpredigt*, p. 8 ff.; and for the Biblical significance of the word *περιπατεῖν*, *vid.* Ernesti, *die Ethik des Paulus*, p. 67 ff.

LECTURE VIII.

1 THESS. ii. 13–16.

NOTE 1, p. 88, vers. 15, 16. — “Bekanntlich findet sich keine ähnliche Diatribe gegen die Juden in allen paulinischen Briefen; aber die an die Thessalonicher sind auch die einzigen Denkmäler einer Lebensperiode des Apostels, in welcher er noch mit keinem innerchristlichen Gegensätze, sondern nur mit dem ungläubigen Judenthume zu kämpfen hatte. Es war die Periode der schärfsten Spannung zwischen ihm und seinem Volke, das den abtrünnigen Vorkämpfer des Christenthums mit dem wildesten Fanaticismus verfolgte.”—Weiss, *Apokalyptische Studien*, in *Stud. u. Krit.* 1869, p. 24.

NOTE 2, p. 92, ver. 16.—Baur sees the tone of a later age in this verse. He can only see in it an evidence that the destruction of Jerusalem had already taken place when this Epistle was written. But Jowett answers well: “To the apostle, reading the future in the present, the state of Judea at any time during the last thirty years before the destruction of the city, would have been sufficient to justify the

expression, 'wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.' The fearful looking for of judgment was natural, not only to Christians, but to Jews themselves, to Josephus as well as to St. Paul. The passage, however, must not be strained beyond its natural meaning. The word *ὀργή*, wrath, in other places (Rom. i. 18, ii. 8) refers at least as much to final impenitence and hardness of heart, 'the spiritual wrath of God,' as to temporal judgments. And the connection in which it occurs here, 'forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway,' shows the apostle to be speaking, not of punishment, but of reprobation" (*vid.* also Farrar, *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 586).

NOTE 3, p. 92.—It is said in the text, "Hardly fourteen years after the date of this Epistle, it (the wrath) overtook them with a sudden surprise." The reference is to the disturbances which became so frightfully intensified by the rapacity of Gessius Florus in A.D. 65—disturbances which had no cessation till, five years later, ruin in its final form descended upon the city.

LECTURE IX.

1 THESS. ii. 17-20.

NOTE 1, p. 99, ver. 18.—*Satan hindered us.* On Paul's infirmity in the flesh, *vid.* Lightfoot on *Galatians*, p. 169 ff.; Stanley on *Corinthians*, p. 549 ff.; and Howson's *Lectures on the Character of St. Paul*, p. 65 ff. Laurent has an elaborate chronological note on vv. 17-18 in *Stud. u. Krit.* 1864, p. 512.

NOTE 2, p. 101, ver. 19.—*Crown of rejoicing.* Bishop Alexander, relying chiefly upon the practice of the LXX., would obliterate the distinction between *στέφανος* and

διάδημα, as far as Pauline usage is concerned. He regards στέφανος as simply meaning an ornament of noble dignity—a distinction primarily in connection with, and with allusion to royalty, but without any allusion to victory.

The distinction, however, as Lightfoot on Phil. iv. 1 points out, must be carefully maintained. διάδημα is a regal or a priestly diadem; στέφανος, on the other hand, the word used here, is a chaplet. The idea involved in it is not dominion, but “either victory or merriment, as the wreath was worn equally by the conqueror and by the holiday-maker.” Both in this passage and in the corresponding one Phil. iv. 1, the idea of victory is uppermost, the idea of rejoicing being also, and that of necessity, implied. In both passages the context brings this wreath of joyful victory into connection with the coming of the Lord. Cornelius a Lapide’s exposition is exegetically faulty, but points us none the less to the ultimate truth. He understands by the “crown of rejoicing” the Thessalonian converts themselves as at last standing as a wreath or crown around the apostle—the crown in which he is to rejoice, and is to be glorified before God and angels and men “at that day.” On Phil. iv. 1, he gives illustrations of the ecclesiastical use of “Corona Domini,” to signify the Church of Christ.

His coming. Here for the first time the word παρουσία appears (*vid.* Rothe, *Dogmatik*, iv. 60 ff.). The passage may be brought into comparison with 1 John ii. 28. In John’s writings it only occurs in that verse. It has exactly the same meaning there as in all the other groups of apostolic writings, *e.g.* Matt., James, Peter, 1 and 2 Thess., Cor. Westcott thus remarks on its solitary appearance in 1 John ii. 28, “Its single occurrence here, where it might easily have been omitted, and exactly in the same sense as it bears in all the other places, is a signal example of the danger of drawing conclusions from the negative phenomena of the books of the New Testament. The

fact is all the more worthy of notice as the subject of eschatology falls into the background in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John. Compare John xxi. 22. It may be added that St. John does not use the Pauline word ἐπιφάνεια."

LECTURE X.

1 THESS. iii. 1-5.

NOTE 1, p. 111, ver. 3.—*For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.* Church history gives nowhere a more striking illustration of these words, and of the power which lies in them to strengthen and comfort, than in the story of the banishment of some five thousand bishops and presbyters, with their adherents, into the desert, by Hunneric, during the African persecutions of the sixth century. They were torn from their homes, and shut up amid squalor and hunger in a small prison, and afterwards driven, with every species of maltreatment, over the burning sands. Yet the song of that suffering pilgrim-band had its constant refrain, "*such glory have all God's saints.*" Gibbon, ch. xxxvii., and Card. Newman's *Essays on Miracles*, p. 370.

NOTE 2, p. 114, ver. 5.—*The tempter.* *Vid.* Trench, *Studies in the Gospels: The Temptation*, p. 17, "Assuredly this doctrine of an evil spirit, tempting, seducing, deceiving, prompting to rebellion and revolt, so far from casting a deeper gloom on the destinies of humanity, is full of consolation, and lights up with a gleam and glimpse of hope spots which seem utterly dark without it. One might well despair of oneself, having no choice but to believe that all the strange suggestions of evil which have risen up before one's own heart had been born there; one might well despair of one's kind, having no choice but to believe that all its hideous sins and all its monstrous crimes had been self-

conceived and bred within its own bosom. But there is hope, if 'an enemy have done this;' if, however, the soil *in* which these wicked thoughts and wicked works have sprung up has been the heart of man, yet the seed *from* which they sprung had been there sown by the hand of another."

LECTURE XI.

1 THESS. iii. 6-10.

NOTE 1, p. 116, ver. 6.—*Brought us good tidings.* εὐαγγελισαμένου. The word appears several times in Luke's Gospel, and not at all in the others. Its appearance in that Gospel, which was possibly, in whole or in part, already in the hands of the Thessalonians, may account for its use here. The tidings of their faith and charity and kindly remembrance of their benefactors came now as a kind of gospel to Paul, just as the true gospel had previously come through his instrumentality to them.

NOTE 2, p. 123, ver. 10.—*And might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.* On καταρτίζω, *vid.* Webster's *Syntax and Synonyms of the Greek Testament*, p. 216; Stanley on 1 Cor. i. 10, and Lightfoot on Gal. vi. 1. Compare Rev. iii. 2, and note thereon in my *Messages to the Seven Churches*, p. 278.

Wieseler sees in this clause an indication of the very recent origin of the church in Thessalonica; Baur sees in it, on the other hand, an evidence that it had long been in existence. Both are wrong. The passage yields itself as a support to neither view. Faith is far from having attained its perfection even in the most exemplary company of believers. There is therefore nothing at all inconsistent in the apostle's addressing these Thessalonians, whom he had called "Ensamples to all that believe" (1 Thess. i. 7), as still short of what they might yet attain.

LECTURE XII.

1 THESS. iii. 11-13.

NOTE 1, p. 128, ver. 11.—On the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ and prayer addressed to Him, *vid.* Liddon's *Divinity of Christ*, Lect. vii., and especially his note as against Colenso.

NOTE 2, p. 131, ver. 12.—*Love one toward another, and toward all men.* *Vid.* Professor Curtius, *Alterthum und Gegenwart*, p. 183, where the idea of friendship in the ancient heathen world is discussed and compared with the Christian idea of it.

Max Müller, in giving Christianity the credit of originating the science of language, has said, "Not till that word *barbarian* was struck out of the dictionary of mankind, and replaced by brother, not till the right of all nations of the world to be classed as members of one genus or kind was recognised, can we look even for the first beginnings of our science. This change was effected by Christianity. To the Hindu, every man not twice born was a Mlechha; to the Greek, every man not speaking Greek was a barbarian; to the Jew, every person not circumcised was a Gentile; to the Moham-medan, every man not believing in the prophet is a Giaur or Kaffir. It was Christianity which first broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile, between Greek and barbarian, between the white and the black. *Humanity* is a word which you look for in vain in Plato or Aristotle; the idea of mankind as one family, as the children of one God, is an idea of Christian growth; and the science of mankind, and of the languages of mankind, is a science which, without Christianity, would never have sprung into life. When people had been taught to look upon all men as brethren, then, and then only, did the variety of human speech present itself as a problem that called for a solution in the eyes

of thoughtful observers ; and I, therefore, date the real beginning of the science of language from the first day of Pentecost." (*Lectures*, I. p. 123.)

LECTURE XIII.

1 THESS. iv. 1-8.

NOTE 1, p. 143, ver. 3.—*That ye should abstain from fornication.* "Das Heidenthum ist dem Apostel seinem Wesen nach *εἰδωλολατρεία*, als deren Hauptattribute er die *πορνεία*, Hurerei, und die *πλεονεξία*, den Eigennutz, das mit dem Vorhandenen sich nicht Begnügen und immer mehr haben Wollen, das sich Verrennen der Subjectivität in der Selbstheit (das sich auf die Spitze Stellen des Ich), im Gegensatz zu der Liebe als der absoluten Dahingabe unserer selbst an Gott und seine persönlichen Geschöpfe, die mit uns Gegenstand seiner Liebe sind, bezeichnet. Insofern diese beiden Laster des Heidenthums in den Christengemeinden noch nicht völlig ausgerottet waren, ermahnt der Apostel in Bezug auf die *πορνεία*, ver. 3, und die *πλεονεξία*, ver. 6. Wer auf die in diesen Ermahnungen geforderte Heiligung als Gottes Willen nicht eingeht (vers. 3, 7) der widerstrebt nicht Menschen, sondern Gott, der zur Heiligung den Geist als Beistand und Führer in uns gegeben hat, ver. 8." Thus simply and clearly has Opitz explained this passage, *Das System des Paulus nach seinen Briefen*, p. 288.

"When Gentiles were lifted out of the midst of the surrounding pollutions into the Christian Church, we need not wonder that the taint of their old corruptions still adhered to them. The first Christian Council—that very Council which asserted Gentile freedom from Mosaic ordinances—deemed it needful to insert in the *Magna Charta* of our liberty a solemn warning against this vice."—Dr. Lillie, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 213.

NOTE 2, p. 143, ver. 4. — *His vessel*. The most complete statement of the argument in favour of understanding *σκεῦος* as *wife*, is found in Lünemann and Eadie. There are, however, stronger arguments in support of the view that the word means *body*. Mason (*N.T. Commentary for English Readers*) in a remarkably good note defends this latter view. The note is easy of access and need not be quoted here. The same view is yet more fully defended by Linder, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1867, p. 516. He says well, in addition to the arguments usually adduced, "Wir haben uns mit obiger Erklärung nie befreunden können und theilen die Ansicht de Wette's, dass durch dieselbe jedenfalls eine niedrige Ansicht von der Ehe begründet werde, während doch der Apostel die Bedeutung derselben nicht hoch genug stellen kann, indem er ja bekanntlich das Verhältniss des Mannes zum Weibe mit demjenigen, in welchem Christus zu seiner Gemeinde steht, in vergleichung setzt und überhaupt sie als eine heilige Anstalt zum Dienste Gottes, worin Eines dem Anderen Handreichung zum ewigen Leben thun soll, dargestellt (1 Cor. vii. 16). Durch diese Erklärung würde das Weib vom Manne abhängig gemacht, während doch in dieser Beziehung Paulus Beide als gleichberechtigt darstellt (1 Cor. vii. 3, 4). Nach 1 Mos. iii. 16 wäre nach der nun fast allgemein angenommenen Erklärung dieser Stelle eher der Mann das *σκεῦος* und nicht das Weib, worüber die Auslegungen von Keil und Delitzsch nachzusehen sind."

Besides, in regard to the rendering *wife*, and the somewhat coarse metaphor which lies in it, while it can be supported by Rabbinic instances, it would not be very intelligible to Gentile readers. Farrar says, in this connection (*St. Paul*, i. 588), "Would the Thessalonians, whose women held a much higher and freer position than Oriental women, have been aware of this somewhat repulsive Orientalism? Would the use of it have been worthy of St. Paul's refinement? and

is he not, as Theodoret observes, speaking to celibates and to women as well as to men?"

The propriety of the meaning of *σκεῦος*, body, is well illustrated by the following passage from Professor Teichmüller, *Ueber die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, p. 111: "Der Leib als Diener und Geschöpf der Seele. Denn es ist ja sichtlich genug, dass er ganz gehorcht; eine Regung des Willens setzt unsere Füße in Bewegung: eine Gedanke erhebt unsere Augenlider und richtet die Muskeln des Kopfes; ein Wunsch schnellst den liegenden Leib plötzlich in die Höhe und schwingt ihn im Sprung über den Boden dahin. Der Leib ist der gefügigste Diener, der schon aus blosser Ahnung, ohne Befehl zu empfangen, gehorcht. Ja, er ist auch unser Geschöpf; denn er ist von sich selbst zu nichts fähig und muss ohne Seele sofort hülfslos zu Grunde gehen. Die Seele ist's, die sich seiner erbarmt, ihn vor Kälte und Hitze schützt, ihn täglich reinigt und nährt und trinkt, ja die Vorkehrungen zu seiner Vermehrung trifft. Die Seele ist also in gewissem Sinne die Schöpferin des Leibes, da sie ihm durch Speise täglich neue Kräfte zuführt und ihn so immer neu erzeugt."

NOTE 3, p. 144, ver. 5.—*Not in the lust of concupiscence.* *πάθος* and *ἐπιθυμία* occur together in Col. iii. 5; compare also Gal. v. 24. The first represents vice on its passive, the second on its active side. *ἐπιθυμία* is also to be regarded as wider than *πάθος* (*vid.* Lightfoot on Col. iii. 5).

NOTE 4, p. 145, ver. 6.—*That no man go beyond and defraud his brother.* Lünemann gives very satisfactory arguments for understanding this of a new but allied subject. Hofmann, too, well confirms and supplements them. The reference now is to a new type of sin—the second cardinal sin of the heathen world, *πλεονεξία*, not sensuality, but avarice, greed. This vice is found frequently coupled with *πορνεία* (*vid.* Stanley on 1 Cor. v. 10; Lightfoot on Col. iii. 5, and

Eadie on Eph. iv. 19 ; *vid.* also Dr. Rothe in sermon on this verse, *Predigten*, i. p. 138). He accepts the view that two vices are specified here. The Thessalonians are warned against these, and by implication exhorted to follow after "Reinheit, Keuschheit des ganzen Menschen und ungefärbte Bruderliebe — so nennt unsere Epistel die beiden Stücke, in welchen diese Heiligung besteht."

Grotius sees a need for this injunction in the fact that the Thessalonians were to a large extent merchants. "Cum Thessalonicenses magni mercatores fuerint, meritò illis Apostolus ea inculcat præcepta, quæ et Ephesiis inculcavit (Eph. iv. 19)." There is no need for such a reference.

LECTURE XIV.

1 THESS. iv. 9-12.

NOTE 1, p. 154, ver. 10.—On the poverty of the churches in Macedonia and its causes, *vid.* a special note by Stanley on 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, and also Dr. Plumptre on the same passage, and Arnold's *Roman Commonwealth*, ii. p. 382.

NOTE 2, p. 157, ver. 11.—*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.* Köster in an article in the *Studien und Kritiken*, 1854, p. 318, in which he seeks to prove that Paul was acquainted with many of the Greek classics, and especially with Demosthenes, holds that in this place there is probably a reminiscence, more or less conscious, of the words ἔχειν ἡσυχίαν καὶ τὰ ὑμέτερα αὐτῶν πράττειν, Demosth. *Ecord. Oration*, p. 143.

On the Christian conception of labour, *vid.* Curtius' lecture on "Arbeit und Musse," in his *Alterthum und Gegenwart*; Döllinger's *Christenthum und Kirche*, p. 403; Luthardt's *Vorträge*, iii. p. 276; and Bishop Alexander in *Speaker's Commentary*, *in loc.*

LECTURE XV.

1 THESS. iv. 13-15.

NOTE 1, p. 164, ver. 13.—*I would not have you to be ignorant.* “*θελεῖν* bedeutet an allen paulinischen Stellen nicht das Wollen des Entschlusses sondern das Wollen des Wunsches.”—Wendt, *Fleisch und Geist*, p. 138.

NOTE 2, p. 164, ver. 13.—*That ye sorrow not.* Dr. Plumptre (on Matt. xxvii. 52), in *Ellicott's N.T. Com. for English Readers*, suggests that the appearance of those who came out of the opened graves at the Saviour's resurrection and “appeared unto many,” “met the feeling, sure to arise among those who were looking for an immediate manifestation of the kingdom, —as it arose afterwards at Thessalonica,—that such as had so died were shut out from their share in that kingdom; and we have thus an adequate reason for their appearance, so that friends and kindred might not sorrow for them as others who had no hope. The statement that they did not appear till after our Lord's resurrection, is from this point of view significant. The disciples were thus taught to look on that resurrection, not as an isolated phenomenon, but as the ‘first-fruits’ of the victory over death (1 Cor. xv. 20), in which not they themselves only, but those also whom they had loved and lost were to be sharers.”

NOTE 3, p. 165, ver. 13.—*Even as others which have no hope.* Dr. Haymann, Homer's *Odyssey*, vol. ii. preface, p. 118, thus writes regarding the dreary state of the Homeric dead: “I ought to notice the Homeric belief as regards the state of the dead. The dreary and cheerless aspect which this presented to the poet's

mind, even in the case of Achilles, his prime hero, and Agamemnon, king of men, and Ajax, whose peculiarly unhappy fate and brilliant services on earth would have entitled him to consolation, if there had been any to be found, hardly needs a comment. The first of these bitterly contrasts his shadowy primacy with the lot of the meanest hireling on earth. The dead have no prospect; they only look back to the past, or seek to snatch a glimpse of the present. They dwell on the triumphs, or on the wrongs and sufferings, of this mortal life, and sympathize, after a forlorn and bereaved fashion, with those whom they have left behind. The picture is one of such blank desolation as came spontaneously to the poet's mind, on whom neither faith nor philosophy had yet dawned, but who yet could not so far renounce man's birthright of immortality as to conceive of the utter extinction of personality in what had once been a human soul. The dead of Homer have pride, they cherish grudges and curiosity, affection and resentment, but they have, in a later poet's phrase, 'left hope behind.' The casual exceptions of the few favoured heroes who were by birth or marriage connected with Zeus himself, only prove more pointedly the dismal universality of the rule by which the rest are bound."

Vid. also the well-known essay of Lessing, *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet*.

NOTE 4, p. 167, ver. 13.—*Asleep*. On the so-called *ψυχοπαύνη*, *vid.* articles in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1836, p. 916, and 1858, p. 278.

NOTE 5, p. 173, ver. 15.—Bishop Wordsworth has a long and interesting and satisfactory note on this verse. He has also followed it up in *Replies to Essays and Reviews*, p. 441 ff.

LECTURE XVI.

1 THESS. iv. 16-18.

NOTE 1, p. 178, ver. 16.—*The voice of the archangel.* Jeremy Taylor (serm. vii.) says well in regard to the voice, although we may not accept his exposition otherwise: “Do we not see by experience that nothing of equal loudness does awaken us sooner than a man’s voice, especially if we be called by name? And thus also it shall be in the resurrection; we shall be awakened by the voice of a man, and He that called Lazarus by name from his grave shall also call us; for although S. Paul affirms that ‘the trumpet shall sound, and there shall be the voice of an archangel,’ yet this is not a word of nature, but of office and ministry. Christ Himself is that archangel, and He shall ‘descend with a mighty shout,’ saith the apostle, ‘and all that are in the grave shall hear His voice,’ saith S. John. So that we shall be awakened by the voice of a man, because we are only fallen asleep by the decree of God; and when the cock and the lark call us up to prayer and labour, the first thing we see is an argument of our resurrection from the dead.”

NOTE 2, p. 180, ver. 16.—*With the trump of God.* Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, ii. p. 929, has much to tell us as to what the Rabbins say about this trump: “Wie erwecket dann der heilige gebenedeyte Gott die Todten in der Zukünftigen Welt? Wir werden gelehret, dass der heilige gebenedeyte Gott eine grosse Posaune, welche tausend Ellen lang ist nach der Ellen Gottes, in seine Hand nehmen, und mit derselben blasen werde, und dass derselben Stimme von einem Ende der Welt bis zu dem andern gehen werde. Bey dem ersten Blasen wird die ganze Welt sich bewegen. Bey dem zweyten Blasen wird der Staub (in welchen die Leiber

der Todten seynd verwandelt worden) abgesondert. Bey dem dritten Blasen werden die Gebeine derselben versammelt. Bey dem vierten Blasen werden die Glieder erwärmet. Bey dem fünften Blasen werden ihre Häupter überzogen. Bey dem sechsten Blasen werden die Geister und Seelen in ihre Leiber gebracht. Bey dem siebenten Blasen werden sie lebendig, und stehen auff ihre Füße mit ihren Kleidern, wie (Zach. ix. 15, 16) gesagt wird."

LECTURE XVII.

1 THESS. v. 1-8.

NOTE 1, p. 189.—"Many characteristics of St. Paul are crowded in this passage. First, the rhetorical turn, οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε. Secondly, the subtle transition in the use of the metaphor of the day of the Lord to the moral lesson that they are to walk as children of the day (comp. Rom. xiii. 1-14). Thirdly, the imagery of ver. 8 (comp. Eph. vi.); also the going off upon the word σωτηρία, which is made the link of the following verse. Fourthly, the thought of our identity with Christ, in which is still retained the allusion to sleeping and waking. And lastly, in the 11th verse, the resumption of the precept which closes the preceding chapter."—Jowett *in loc.*

NOTE 2, p. 190, ver. 1.—Χρόνος and καιρός are well distinguished by Trench, *Synonyms of N.T.* On a similar use of ὥρα, *vid.* Westcott on 1 John ii. 18. On "the times and the seasons," as they have so far appeared already in the history of the Church, *vid.* Westcott's *Historic Faith*, Lect. VII. On the Christian's attitude of expectancy in regard to the day of the Lord, *vid.* suggestive sermon in Newman's *Sermons* (VI. No. 17).

NOTE 3, p. 192, ver. 2.—*As a thief in the night.* The advent was looked for in the ancient Church as taking place at midnight. Hence the so-called Nocturns. “Tunc aperietur cœlum medium intempesta et tenebrosa nocte, ut in orbe toto lumen descendentis Dei tanquam fulgur appareat. Quod Sibylla his versibus locuta est :

‘Οππότε’ ἂν ἔλθῃ
Πῦρ, ἔσται σκότος ἐν τῇ μέσση νυκτὶ μελαίνῃ.

Hæc est nox, quæ a nobis propter adventum regis ac Dei nostri pervigilio celebratur; cujus noctis duplex ratio est, quod in ea et vitam tum recepit, cum passus est, et postea orbis terræ regnum recepturus est.”—Lactantius, *Instit.* vii. 19. 2.

Dr. Isaac Williams, *Devotional Commentary on the Gospel Narrative; The Holy Week*, p. 332, says on the passage, “And at midnight there was a cry, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him:”—“Hence the nocturns, or nightly services of the ancient Church, while as yet they watched. And, indeed, our Lord had spoken of His coming as at the dead of night, and also at some watch of the night which we know not of. But St. Augustine, Hilary, and others would explain midnight as the time when no one knew or expected; and Origen, as the midnight of carelessness and depth of negligence.”

NOTE 4, p. 194, ver. 3.—*Destruction.* In 1 Tim. vi. 9 we find ὀλεθρος and ἀπώλεια—destruction and perdition—coupled together. Ellicott *in loc.* thus distinguishes them: “Ὀλεθρος is ‘destruction’ in a general sense, whether of *body* or *soul*; ἀπώλεια intensifies it by pointing mainly to the latter. Ὀλεθρος is used by St. Paul alone, 1 Cor. v. 5, 1 Thess. v. 3, where it points more to *temporal* destruction; and 2 Thess. i. 9, where the epithet αἰώνιος is specially added to support its application to *final* ‘perdition.’” On ἀπώλεια, *vid.* Plumptre on Matt. vii. 13, in Ellicott’s *N.T. Com. for English Readers*.

NOTE 5, p. 194, ver. 3.—*As travail upon a woman with child.* Comp. Matt. xxiv. 8, “The beginning of sorrows,” literally, the beginning of travail-pangs. The upheavals and tribulations which are to precede the coming of the Messiah, are expressly called by the Rabbins the birth-pangs of the Messiah.—Eisenmenger’s *Entdecktes Judenthum*, i. p. 711.

NOTE 6, p. 197, ver. 4.—*As a thief.* On the reading of Codex Vaticanus B, Buttmann in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1860, p. 379, observes that the phrase *ὡς κλέπτῃς* is always found with the verb *ἤξειν*, but that it does not at all cohere with the verb *καταλαμβάνειν*, which is used here. He holds that the figure is destroyed; a thief overtakes nothing, but is, on the contrary, overtaken. On this ground, therefore, he decides in favour of the reading *ὡς κλέπτας*,—as daylight surprises robbers. Westcott and Hort, following Lachmann, accept this reading. It seems, however, better to follow the Revised Version, and to retain *ὡς κλέπτῃς*. Buttmann’s objection, that by so doing we mar, or altogether destroy the figure, is not of great weight.

NOTE 7, p. 198, ver. 7.—*Are drunken in the night.* “The drunkenness he here speaks of is not that from wine only, but that also which comes of all vices. For riches and the desire of wealth is a drunkenness of the soul, and so carnal lust; and every sin you can name is a drunkenness of the soul. On what account then has he called vice sleep? Because, in the first place, the vicious man is inactive with respect to virtue; again, because he sees everything as a vision; he views nothing in its true light, but is full of dreams and oftentimes of unreasonable actions; and if he sees anything good, he (or, it) has no firmness, no fixedness. Such is the present life. It is full of dreams and of phantasy. Riches are a dream, and glory, and everything of that sort. He who sleeps

sees not things that are and have a real subsistence, but things that are not he fancies as things that are. Such is vice, and the life that is passed in vice. It sees not things that are, that is, heavenly, spiritual, abiding things, but things that are fleeting and fly away, and that soon recede from us."—Chrysostom *in loc.*

Howson, *The Metaphors of St. Paul*, Lect. I., well explains the figure of ver. 8, and its connection with sobriety. *Vid.* Rom. xiii. 11–13.

LECTURE XVIII.

1 THESS. v. 9–15.

P. 208, ver. 12.—*To know them which labour among you.* It is interesting to compare with this the highly exaggerated statement of Christian duty towards church-rulers, in Ignatii *Epist. ad Smyrnæos*, cap. viii. and ix., *Καλῶς ἔχει, Θεὸν καὶ ἐπίσκοπον εἰδέναι. Ὁ τιμῶν ἐπίσκοπον ὑπὸ Θεοῦ τετίμηται.* We have in this passage εἰδέναι used exactly as it is by Paul, as synonymous with ἐπιγινώσκειν or τιμᾶν.

LECTURE XIX.

1 THESS. v. 16–18.

P. 220, ver. 17.—On the duty of ceaseless prayer, *vid.* Rothe's *Ethik*, iv. p. 169; and on 'Thanksgiving and prayer,' *vid.* Howson on *Character of St. Paul*.

LECTURE XX.

1 THESS. v. 19–22.

P. 235, ver. 22.—*Abstain from all appearance of evil.* Revised Version, *Abstain from every form of*

evil. On the impossibility of always avoiding the appearance of evil, and the duty, in certain circumstances, of giving the appearance of it, Daub, *Theol. Moral.* ii. 1, p. 218, says well: "Es ist unbedingt verboten, einen bösen Schein zu geben; aber es kann sein, dass nicht einer, sondern die anderen den bösen Schein verschuldet haben, der auf den einen kommt. In dieser Beziehung ist die Pflicht bedingt. Denn da die Ehre vom Urtheile der Menschen abhängt, so ist es für den Einzelnen nicht immer möglich, den bösen Schein, welchen nicht er, sondern sie verschulden, zu vermeiden."

LECTURE XXI.

1 THESS. v. 23-28.

NOTE 1, p. 239, ver. 23.—*Your whole spirit and soul and body.* For further treatment of this subject, reference may be made to Wendt, *Die Begriffe Fleisch und Geist*, p. 123; Dean Stanley's *American Addresses and Sermons*, his sermon on "The Nature of Man;" and a good note by Alexander in *Speaker's Commentary*, *in loc.*

NOTE 2, p. 245, ver. 24.—*Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.* Compare ὁ Θεὸς ἀπλοῦν καὶ ἀληθὲς ἐν τε ἔργῳ καὶ ἐν λόγῳ, Plato, *de Repub.* ii. 431, and

Ψευδοηγορεῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταται στόμα
τὸ Διόν, ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἔπος τελεῖ.

Æschyl. *Prometh.* 1053.

SECOND THESSALONIANS.

LECTURE XXII.

2 THESS. i. 1-7.

NOTE 1, p. 260, ver. 5.—*A manifest token.* Erasmus *in loc.* says: “Non est παράδειγμα sed ἔνδειγμα, i.e. *exemplum* sive *ostensionem*, aut *specimen*, aut *declarationem*. Nam *exemplar* imitandi gratiā proponitur, ἔνδειγμα declarat quod latebat.” And better still, Linder, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1867, p. 523: “Ἐνδειγμα ist hier gar nicht in der Bedeutung als Vorzeichen aufzufassen, sondern bezeichnet das Offenbar werden von etwas verborgenem, das zum klaren Bewusstsein kommt, wie überall ἐνδεικνύναι (Rom. ii. 15, ix. 17-22; 2 Cor. viii. 24; Eph. ii. 7). In der That, unter welchen Umständen mehr als bei Erduldung von Drangsalen, welche die Feinde des Evangeliums den Christen bereiteten, musste in ihren Herzen der Glaube an eine dereinst vergeltende Gerechtigkeit Gottes in seiner ganzen Kraft sich geltend machen? Es ist also hierdurch das *jus talionis* gemeint, wie man es gewöhnlich an unserer Stelle aufgefasst hat.”

NOTE 2, p. 263, ver. 6.—*Tribulation to them that trouble you.* For something like a similar studied repetition of the word, and also for a somewhat similar thought, compare Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 265-6:—

οἱ αὐτῶ κακὰ τεύχει ἀνὴρ ἄλλω κακὰ τεύχων,
ἡ δὲ κακὴ βουλή τῶ βουλευσάντι κακίστη.

This distich enunciates a proverb, which means that honesty is the best policy. *Vid.* Paley's *Hesiod*, *in loc.*

LECTURE XXIII.

2 THESS. i. 8-12.

P. 270, ver. 9.—In connection with the very solemn questions which rise out of this verse, *vid.* the sober and chastened discussion of them in the lecture on “The Life Eternal,” in Westcott’s *Historic Faith*.

LECTURE XXIV.

2 THESS. ii. 1-4.

P. 288.—In addition to the commentaries used, and the works which are referred to in the lecture, reference may be made to the following works as more or less, and from their own distinctive points of view, treating of the vexed question of “the man of sin :”—

Lightfoot, *Harmony of the New Testament*.

Heubner in his Commentary.

Döllinger, *Christenthum und Kirche*, Beilage i. An interesting historical survey of the exposition of this passage.

Weiss in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1869, “Apocalyp-tische Studien.”

Immer, *N.T. Theologie*, p. 220.

Zeitschrift der Hist. Theologie, article “Antichrist,” 1842.

Baur, *St. Paul*, ii. append. iii.

Godet, *New Test. Studies*, essay on the Apocalypse.

LECTURE XXV.

2 THESS. ii. 5-12.

NOTE 1, p. 296, ver. 8.—*With the brightness of His coming.* Compare 2 Clement ad Cor. xii. : τὴν ἡμέραν

τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ Θεοῦ. There ἐπιφάνεια is used for παρουσία. In the New Testament this use of the word is found only in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. vi. 14 ; 2 Tim. i. 10, iv. 1, 8 ; Tit. ii. 13). In the passage before us there is no more than an approach to that use.

NOTE 2, p. 298, ver. 10.—*The love of the truth.* Wendt, in an article on *Der Gebrauch der Wörter ἀλήθεια*, etc., in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1883, p. 534, has the following good note: “Die ἀλήθεια steht hier nicht etwa im Gegensatz zur ἀπάτη oder πλάνη, so dass wir sie deshalb als Wahrheit der Erkenntniss oder Verkündigung auffassen müssten, sondern im Gegensatze zu der ἀδικία, welche den Inhalt und die Art der Irreleitung ausmacht. Der Sinn ist, dass jene Personifikation der Unsittlichkeit, als welche der Antichrist gedacht ist, die Ungläubigen zur Unsittlichkeit verführen wird und dass in dieser Verführung und dem darauf folgenden göttlichen Gerichte die Strafe dafür liegen wird, dass sie dem, was ethisch richtig ist, nämlich dem christlichen Evangelium, welches sie über das richtige ethisch-religiöse Verhalten belehren und zu demselben antreiben und befähigen wollte, keine Liebe und kein Vertrauen gewidmet haben. Unter der ἀλήθεια ist also freilich das christliche Evangelium verstanden, aber dasselbe nicht im allgemeinen, sondern speciell in der Beziehung, dass es jene ethische Art und Abzweckung hat. Wir müssen dann aber auch in dem folgenden ver. 12, wo Paulus seine Dankbarkeit darüber ausspricht, dass Gott die Thessalonicher, im Gegensatze zu den eben charakterisierten ἀπολλύμενοι, erwählt habe zum Heile ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας, diese letzten Worte von dem Vertrauen auf das ethisch Richtige verstehen ; nicht der christliche Glaube im allgemeinen, sondern speciell die Hingabe des Gläubigen an den ethischen Inhalt des Evangeliums ist gemeint, und deshalb erscheint diese πίστις ἀληθείας so unmittelbar verknüpft mit dem ἀγιασμός πνεύματος, welcher ebenfalls eine im

sittlichen Leben sich vollziehende Erfahrung des Gläubigen durch den Gottesgeist bedeutet."

LECTURE XXVI.

2 THESS. ii. 13–iii. 5.

NOTE 1, p. 313, ver. 15.—*The traditions.* *Vid.* 1 Cor. xi. 2, and Stanley's note thereon. The word corresponds with *παραγγελία* in classical Greek. "The verb is well expressed by the Latin 'trado,' as in the phrase 'docendo, narrando, *trado*.' The word 'tradition,' formed from the less frequent substantive 'traditio,' in its present sense implies 'handing down orally from generation to generation,' a meaning alien to passages like the present. Here the word is best expressed by 'command' or 'communication;' such 'command' being sometimes oral, sometimes written, but always delivered, not 'traditionally' through many links, but direct from the teacher to the taught."

NOTE 2, p. 315, ver. 16.—*Everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.* "Wie Gott durch Christus im Heil uns eine ewige *παράκλησις* gestiftet hat, so sind sie es Beide, welche (unmittelbar oder durch ihre Diener) dieselbe an unseren Herzen zu allseitiger, geistlich sittlicher, christlicher Vollkommenheit vollziehen. Die *παράκλησις αἰωνία* ist der Versöhnungsfriede in der Gewissheit der Vergebung unserer Schuld, den Gott für alle Zeit durch Christus gestiftet und worin er uns seine Liebe erwiesen hat. *ἐλπὶς ἀγαθὴ* ist der freudige Hoffnungsblick in die Zukunft der Heilsvollendung, der uns in dem Versöhnungsfrieden als dessen Ausgang in Herrlichkeit eröffnet ist und in dem wir schon jetzt triumphiren auch under Leiden."—Opitz, *Das System des Paulus nach seinen Briefen*, p. 259.

LECTURE XXVII.

2 THESS. iii. 6-18.

NOTE 1, p. 324, ver. 6.—On this verse Cyprian, *De Catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitate*, c. 23, writes: “Recedendum est a delinquentibus vel immo fugiendum, ne dum quis male ambulantibus jungitur et per itinera erroris et criminis graditur, a via veri itineris exerrans pari crimine et ipse teneatur. Unus Deus est et Christus unus et una ecclesia ejus et fides una et plebs una in solidam corporis unitatem concordiae glutino copulata. Scindi unitas non potest nec corpus unum discidio compaginis separari, divulsis laceratione visceribus in frusta discerpi.”

NOTE 2, p. 325, ver. 9.—*To make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.*

Paul is called by Clement, 1 Ep. ad Cor. v., a notable *pattern* of patient endurance — ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός. Lightfoot thereon has this note, “*a copy, an example*, as for instance a pencil-drawing to be traced over in ink, or an outline to be filled in and coloured. The classical word is ὑπογραφή. The sister art of sculpture supplies a similar metaphor in ὑποτύπωσις, the first rough model, 1 Tim. i. 16; 2 Tim. i. 13.”

NOTE 3, p. 327, ver. 10.—*If any would not work, neither should he eat.*

“Ne fugias laborem, ut non perdas coronam,” S. Ephrem. in Cornelius a Lapide. *Vid.* Barrow’s group of noble sermons on Christian Industry.

NOTE 4, p. 328, ver. 13.—*Not weary in well-doing.* On Gal. vi. 9, Lightfoot’s note is: “The word καλοποιεῖν includes ἀγαθοποιεῖν and more, for while τὰ ἀγαθὰ are

beneficent actions, kind services, etc., things good in their results, τὰ καλὰ are right actions, such as are beautiful in themselves, things absolutely good. In this passage, as well as in 2 Thess. iii. 13, the antithesis of καλὸν and κακὸν seems to be intended, though it can scarcely be translated into English; ‘in *well*-doing let us not show an *ill* heart.’”

THE END.



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